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NGL
La Fontaine

THE

VILLAGE PASTOR

AND

HIS CHILDREN.

THE

VILLAGE PASTOR

AND

HIS CHILDREN.

A NOVEL.

FOUR VOLUMES IN TWO.

from the german of

AUGUSTUS LA FONTAINE.

"Erudition will be acquired, and its fund augmented; the human mind "may continue its progress towards perfection; taste may change; but so "long as there are good and susceptible hearts, they will be moved on read-"ing my work: there will always be fathers, children, spouses; and as I "write their sentiments from the feelings of my soul, I am sure of always "finding readers."

VILLAGE PASTOR, vol. i. p. 68.

VOL I.

(*from the London edition of* 1803.)

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THE

VILLAGE PASTOR.

CHAP. I.

Introduction.

I HAVE just completed my sixtieth year; and am about to commence my first work. It is indeed rather late to assume the trade of an author, yet it might perhaps be excusable were I to give a long new commentary on the classics, or even a research into ancient geography, or a learned dissertation on the nature of man and the depravity of morals. I have frequently been thinking on it; nay, I have gone so far as to compose in idea not only these three works, but a number of others of a similar nature, which doubtless would be more suitable to my age and profession than the one I now undertake: but I feel myself hurried on; and, were I still to hesitate as I have done during some months, I should never write at all: I shall therefore continue for my pleasure, if not for that of my readers. I feel courage enough to brave criticism, and to give myself little concern about what may be said, provided I indulge my inclination. From my earliest youth I have always entertained the most profound respect for authors, as well as the passion of some day or other becoming one myself; and I will tell you what inspired me with it.

My father was minister of a village in the environs of Magdeburg; he was firm, courageous, and sincere; and in his sermons no more spared the lord of the place and his steward, than he did the meanest of the peasantry; but told the truth without disguise or distinction. The austerity of his morals, the rectitude of his conduct, and his serious deportment were such, that all his parishioners were filled with awe and veneration, and I, his only son, regarded him as the most sublime of created beings, and scarcely dared to open my lips in his presence.

One day a letter was brought him from a relation who lived in Magdeburg, and he came immediately to show it to my mother, near whom I was sitting at the time. I was struck with the air of exultation and pride which animated his grave countenance. The letter contained an invitation to dine with Gellert on an appointed day at his cousin's. After having perused the note, he exclaimed at different intervals—'I shall then see Gellert!' and then he added with a vivacity I had never before witnessed—'I will bring my son along with me, that he may have it to say one day that he has seen Gellert.' A moment afterward he went to walk in the village and informed the taxgatherer and the schoolmaster, with a look of importance, that he was to see Gellert; as if seeing this Gellert would add to his consequence.

*

The whole house was now taken up with preparations for the journey. At length the expected day arrived, and I got into the carriage along with him. He took care to stop at every village on the way to visit the minister; and the first word he said was still sure to be—'my dear friend, do you know I am going to dine with Gellert!' and the reply—'what a happy man you are! how glad should I be to enjoy the same good fortune!'

I was seated in the coach beside him, but he did not say a syllable to me all the way. I could not cease wondering who this Gellert might be, about whom such a rout was made. I never once thought of the fables I used to read every day; for, by dint of repeating them, they were

become so familiar to me that I could hardly suppose it to be more difficult to write than to read them.

At last we arrived at the house of our cousin, where every thing was arranged with the utmost formality for the reception of Gellert. Our cousin, who was generally quite simple, smooth, and jolly, was now puffed up with pride; he spoke slowly, and seemed as if he took time to put his phrases together: he strutted about the garlour like a tragedian on the stage, and holding himself erect while he set the chairs in order—'there,' said he, 'there shall I place Gellert that all my guests may see and hear him.'

And these guests were not as usual, intimate friends or relations; they were chosen from among the most considerable personages of Magdeburg: there were even two deans, which to me, was the *ne plus ultra* of dignity in this world, because my father honored them as his superiors.

My relation's daughter, a pretty young girl, was preparing a garland of the most beautiful flowers, which she intended for Gellert. The moment a footstep was heard in the antichamber every body cried out—'is that he?' for my part, I cunningly slipped as close as I could to the door, to be one of the first to see him: my heart went pit-a-pat, as in the expectation of some extraordinary event. I imagined he would be announced by drums and trumpets; or that he was a giant whose head would touch the ceiling; or else that he would be dressed in cloth of gold, with diamond stars, and decorations like a grand nobleman, and a train of pages following him.

At last he was announced. The whole company rose up, while I, upon tiptoe, stare with timid curiosity, and behold a thin, puny-looking man enter, in a plain grey coat, and with the most modest countenance in the world: however, every eye was fixed upon him—every face expressed the happiness which his presence occasioned; and when he spoke to any one in particular, it was impossible not to perceive the air of consequence that person assumed.

The young lady came to present him with the garland; and delivering it with great timidity, paid him a handsome compliment. The men were all around him; and when he spoke you might have heard a fly in the air. Even the deans of the directory, nay, even my father himself, who was so haughty with the lord of the manor, listened humbly like the rest without venturing to open his mouth.

I could contain myself no longer; so taking my young cousin by the hand, I led her into another room, and begged her to let me know who that gentlemen was.

'Why, my little friend,' answered she, 'it is Gellert.'

'And who is Gellert? why is he treated with so much respect?'

'Do you not know, my dear? it is because he has written books which all the world read and admire: you yourself, have you not read the fables of Gellert?'

'Dear me! yes, I know them by heart.'

'Well then, it is he that wrote them.'

'Ah, Gellert is a great genius! let us return quick to listen to him.'

The impression of that day has never been effaced: from that minute it appeared to me that the sublimest of all honors and glory here below, consisted in knowing how to write a book; it became therefore the height of my ambition and of my hopes; all my projects for a future day had this solely for their object, which, in spite of such favorable dispositious, I have never yet been able to compass.

Behold me arrived at my sixtieth year without having yet published any thing; and still, without having ceased to compose a heap of fine writings in idea. Whenever I chanced to read in a journal that such or such a work was a *desideratum* in our literature, I would run hastily to my closet, take a great quire of white paper, and write in large letters on the first page, the book that

was wanted; then I would complacently turn over the blank leaves, conceiting to myself that they were already covered with my thoughts, and enjoying by anticipation the fine effect they would produce when printed. In looking over the yearly and numerous catalogues of the fair of Leipsic, I would say as Alexander did when he reflected on the conquests of his father—'alas, they will leave me nothing to do!' and still I have not done any thing, continually hesitating about which of my works I should begin with, and unable to determine in favor of one above another; and at the same time divided between the desire of celebrity, and the fear of not obtaining it. Days, months, and years have passed away, and would yet pass away in the same manner, if my wife had not given me a fillip, which, this time at least, will not be without effect.

One of our friends, who had been ruined by several unfortunate events, was deploring his sorrowful destiny along with us, and complained bitterly of having been bereft of every thing he had amassed for his old age.

'That is the fate of all men,' said my good wife, in a compassionate tone. 'Projects, hopes that fly off in smoke—such is the life of man!'

'Oh, no!' replied he, 'that does not happen to all mankind: it is I who am the most unfortunate of all!'

'I assure you,' repeated she, 'that you are not the only one. It is above thirty-six years that my husband has been speaking to me of a book he wishes to write: it is what he desires the most in all the world, and this desire will never be gratified—this book will never be published.'

This observation of my wife struck me forcibly; never had I heard her say any thing similar; she would only smile when I read her the title of a book, and told her I intended to write it; but this time her prediction was so positive that it touched my honor, and I was resolved to prove the fallacy of it.

I shut myself up in my closet, determined not to stir

out without having commenced a grand work. I passed every one of my quires in review, with their titles, and my indecision returned. I fixed at last upon one of the three learned dissertations of which I spoke in the beginning; but which? the choice of that which I should attempt the first, took up some months more; when, in fine, I was decided by a trifle that made me abandon the whole three, and give the public a work of a very different nature. Instead of a huge commentary, or theological dissertation, it is a work in musaic,* done in part many years ago. My grand daughter Lolotte, a child of fourteen years old, has been the cause of this change, in the manner I shall tell you.

My profound respect for the profession of an author was extended even to blank paper: I had always in mind the beautiful thoughts with which I could enrich it; nor could I endure my wife to make use of it either for domestic purposes, or to wrap about packets.

During the first years of our marriage we used, twice a year, to take a little journey to the city. We never had the least dispute but at these two periods, and that was always on the subject of white paper. I would buy whole reams of waste paper, and entreat her to use that; but in vain: my good wife, upon every other point so gentle, so ready to comply, was incorrigible upon that one. She had a brother, a paper manufacturer, who gave us as much white paper, as we chose to take; and she concluded, with some appearance of reason, that there was more economy in making use of white paper which cost us nothing, than waste paper for which I paid money; but I, who was ever thinking of the multitude of compositions I had in my head, hardly believed the manufactory of my brother-in-law would suffice, so I wished to lay up a supply before hand.

* *Musaic*, a word derived from the *Musea*, colleges or temples of the muses of the ancients, which were adorned interiorly and exteriorly with a species of pictures composed of little stones of different colors, curiously inlaid, of which there is an admirable specimen to be seen in the choir of the cathedral of Rheims. This word hasbeen long improperly spelled mosaic. *Trans.*

It was therefore a real vexation for me to see the nice leaves that were to have been the depositaries of my thoughts cut round under a pasty, or torn up for packets. When all our children were dispersed, journies and consequently the occasions of employing paper, became more frequent. In this dilemma, I saw with pleasure, by the catalogues of the fair, which every day became more voluminous, that I should be in no want of waste paper; and so, to engage my wife to make use of it, I made a sort of ingenious system of references with the objects they were to envelop.

Look, said I to her, if you will not have more pleasure in putting your tooth-powder into this treatise on medicine; your false curls and tate in this new philosophy; your knives and scissors in this history of the french revolution. These large pages of metaphysics will serve to fold up your tapestry work, in which, upon a transparent canvas, you embroider with vivid colors, a whimsical design, without any meaning. There are novels for your fans, for your ribbons, for all the fashionable nothings that last but a day: you may vary the colors according to the kind, from black to the tint of the blushing rose: and here are magazines and newspapers for all the pretty little things that are forgotten. I read her some passages from every sheet to enable her to comprehend the propriety of my scheme. She listened to me, and took up her white paper, saying—'it would be a great pity to tear what is already printed.' I had then no other resource but to lock up the writing-paper with the greatest care, until the moment of applying it to its right use.

Some months before the sixtieth anniversary of my birthday, I remarked that every two or three days there was a sheet of post paper missing; then one every day; and at last, frequently two in the same day. This looked serious: whom could I accuse of the theft? for a long time my wife had been quite sedentary, and never made use of white paper, but to write down her accounts of linen and housekeeping, and I delivered it to her as she wanted it, and nobody entered the chamber but herself, our old servant woman, and my grand daughter, Lolotte:

from being accustomed to observe my respect for white paper, the old servant was so careful of it that she would bring me the smallest scraps that fell in her way.

And what could Lolotte have done with white paper? I had got a promise from her to employ waste paper to envelop her doll and toys; and yet Lolotte was the very person culpable. One morning I counted the number of sheets which I left purposely upon my desk; nobody went in but her, and there was one less. In the evening there was another gone; but I was watching her, and caught her in the fact as she was going out of my chamber, holding a fine sheet of post paper in her hand.

'Ha, ha!' cried I, seizing her by the arm, 'have I caught you then? so it is you who steal my paper! and pray now, Lolotte, what can it be that you do with all this paper? four quires in the course of three months! what can you possibly do with it? tell me, Lolotte.' and I looked sufficiently angry.

The little thing, quite thunderstruck, strove to make excuses; but she told me such absurdities that there was no believing them, and this provoked me still more.

'You want then,' said I, 'to add falsity to theft? come, Lolotte, tell me the truth. What did you do with all that paper? if it were only to write, I might pardon you.'

'Well then, dear grandpapa, do pardon me; for indeed it was to write.'

'To write!' said I, smiling; 'and what do you write, Lolotte? is it the account of your doll's wardrobe?' at this moment I perceived that the fingers of the little hand, which I still held, were daubed with ink. 'Yes, yes,' said I to her letting go her hand and tapping her gently on the cheek, 'I see in fact that you have been writing. But, dear child, how could you have made use of four quires of paper? one might write a book in less than that.'

My caressing air gave her courage.

'Grandpapa,' said she, smiling with her infantile graces, 'I write a journal.'

'A journal! and what journal, prithee?'

'My own, grandpapa.'

'Your journal, Lolotte!' and I could not help laughing at the little air of importance with which the child spoke of her journal.

'And tell me then, Lolotte, what happens to you of importance sufficient to furnish matter for a journal?'

'Ah, grandpapa, a great many things happen during one's life!'

'Ah, doubtless, Lolotte, a life of fourteen years is already so filled with interesting events! do you know that four quires of white paper are worth more than all that has happened you?

'Ah, that is the way people always talk of what does not concern them! every body knows the value of what interests themselves.'

'True, you are right: but be quick, show me this journal.'

The little rogue colored, and excused herself with the tone and manners of a young woman; she assured me it was not worth the trouble of reading, begging me above all, not to speak about it to her grandmother, and ran off. As at bottom, I was not sorry to see this child indulge a taste for composition, I gave her a few sheets of paper to continue her journal, and let her go.

It was not but I had curiosity enough to see Lolotte's journal; and as at fourteen years of age we are neither very prudent nor very careful, it was easy for me to find it. I read it; and to my great surprise, I saw that Lolotte, at fourteen, had already an inclination for one of my grandchildren, her cousin, who, like me, was called Charles. This journal was but the history of her heart, and of that passion, expressed with a fire and eloquence very much beyond her age: it was tears, sighs, sleeplessness, justifications, jealousies, eternal constancy, &c. &c. &c.; in fine, every thing that could enter into an affair of the heart. I was quite overwhelmed; and I was divided between the vexation and anger which I felt

from this discovery, and the interest with which these children inspired me, and even the involuntary emotion that the warmth of Lolotte's style gave me.

'What will all this come to? cried I, laying down the paper. I instantly called the little one, and said to her with firmness, and in a very severe tone:—'Lolotte, I have read your journal.'

'Good god! you have read it!' cried she to me, with a look of astonishment and confusion: and then resuming her ordinary gaiety, she came and embraced me; and said to me in a winning voice, putting at the same time her finger on my mouth—'dear grandpapa, I beseech you do not betray me—do not speak of it to my grandmother; you know how she——'

'How, say nothing about it! but Lolotte, what are you thinking of with your love? a child like you should think of nothing yet but her doll.'

She reddened again; but this time it was with spite.

'Always my doll!' cried she in a tone of dissatisfaction: 'it is an age since I laid my doll by. You forget, dear grandpapa, that I am no more a child—I am past fourteen, and my Charles is seventeen. He is a man of honor—my Charles will not deceive me: if only I were not at present so unhappy!—since you know all, good grandpapa, I must tell you the cause of my grief. Charles thinks me faithless——'

Then bursting into tears, she sobbed as if her heart would break.

'Oh, that is too bad! you are only fourteen, and you are thought faithless!'

'And I avow to you, dear grandpapa,' continued she, casting her eyes downward, 'that I am not altogether innocent.'

'Not altogether innocent, Lolotte, at fourteen!

'Oh, it is not but I love Charles still better! grandpapa, you who are so good, you will bring about our reconciliation, will you not?

'Your reconciliation, Lolotte!'

I felt upon the whole affair a confusion of indefinable sentiments: the idea of being the confidant of these little sweethearts, I, their grandfather, a grave minister! added to my grief and anger a something so comical, that I could not help smiling, at the same time that I had the look of being very much vexed. I knew not whether to treat this affair as a childish piece of folly, or as something serious: when I heard the propositions of Lolotte, I was provoked to choler; when I beheld her tears and sobs, I was affected; and when I regarded her little infantile face, I had a mind to laugh. The result of all these different sensations was, that her confidence embarassed me exceedingly.

I resolved, however, to speak to her seriously about this little intrigue, and to make her see her error. She opposed me with a crowd of reasons, and talked to me of her heart, which was in fact several years more forward than her head.

The more she excused herself and disputed, the more I became a father, and not a confidant: I spoke to her at first reasonably, then with severity, and at last with harshness, without obtaining from this little girl any thing like an acknowledgement of her being in the wrong.

'It did not depend upon her,' repeated she, without ceasing, 'not to love her cousin.' And in fine, she cited to me the example of her mother, who was only a year older than herself when she first began to love her husband.

I then recollected, with a profound sigh, that in fact my daughter had troubled the peace of my house, and that for a long time, by a premature inclination. This sad reflection absorbed me intirely, and I remained silent.

The little girl thought she had persuaded me. She conjured me to give her my word not to speak to any body in the world of her journal, or her inclination; and above all, not to her grandmother. In fine, I promised it, to get rid of her. She played so perfectly her double char-

acter of little girl and young woman, that I could not absolutely tell whether I had before me a child, or a young person whose heart was already susceptible of other than childish sensations.

I determined, however, for myself, not to say a word of it to my wife: upon that alone she held a system of severity from which nothing could make her depart.

'It is,' repeated she continually, 'a crime and a shame to love before one is at least eighteen. I was twenty when you first thought of me, and when I was in love with you. And I repeat it, it is a crime and a shame for a young girl to give away her heart before her reason is formed.'

'Perhaps you are right, dear wife,' said I to her; 'but it is a sad thing that the heart so often takes the lead of the head.'

'It is a crime,' repeated she again, 'it is a shame.'

'Nature, dear friend, does not calculate always so exactly.'

'Nature! but it is nature we should follow. Look at the animals that are destitute of reason, and yet set us an example; look at the birds—do they not build their nests before they show the least sign of making love?—and do they not wait till they get all their feathers?'

'Yes, dear friend: but the habitations of men unhappily take more time to build than the nests of birds. How many are there who have never a habitation, and who have notwithstanding a heart?—and how many others, like birds of passage, quit this life before their little ones have all their feathers, and leave them here below without guide or support?'

'Heaven pity those poor creatures!' replied my wife: 'but I will not the less say that it is a crime and a shame to marry so young.'

I did not then speak to my wife the passion of Lolotte, it would have vexed her without answering any purpose; but I promised to myself to survey, in her stead, the little one and her journal, with a *maternal* eye.

In thinking of this journal, it came into my mind that, at the epoch of my courtship and marriage, I also had made a kind of journal, of which I had ceased to think. I searched for the sheets of it at the bottom of a drawer. I read them over again, and was content: there were even some passages in them that struck me by the contrast of my present sentiments with those I entertained at that time; and which made me reflect profoundly on all that passes in the human heart during a long life.

'And what,' cried I, 'is not the map of the human heart as well worth studying as the map of Palestine? Is not a voyage into the interior of our soul as interesting as the discovery of unknown lands, or a voyage by sea in distant climates? there also are to be met with hurricanes, tempests, torrents, shoals, breakers, shipwrecks, and instants of fair wind, and of peaceful, pleasant navigation. Are not the miracles of which the heart of man is capable, the fine actions he can do in the hour of virtue, as much fraught with interest for man as a commentary upon Æschylus? the life of an honest country clergyman and his family, their sentiments, their pride, their giddiness, their spirit of domination—are not passions to be traced here too, although they be not heroes of history that have felt them? the only difference is, that these last have ravaged the half of the world, and shed torrents of blood, and that our tears flowed in the obscurity of a cottage. The mildness, innocence, and patience of those dear children—the sacrifices they have made to duty without vanity, without ostentation, are not these virtues, although they had for their theatre but a simple thatched roof? and even,' continued I, with more vivacity, 'even the innocent love which buds in the heart of Charles and Lolotte—is not this equally interesting to my family as the first love of a young prince would be to all his court.'

'Oh, indeed, surely!' said a sweet litte voice at the door of my closet. 'Dear grandpapa, I am very glad you are better than the greater part of elderly people, who make game of us because they are a few years older, as if we too were not to grow old.'

I turned round, and seeing Lolotte—'what are you doing there, little curious?' said I hastily. 'Get you gone!'

'Oh dear grandpapa! you were so good to me but a moment since!'

'What I was saying, little girl, is the begining of a book that you should not listen to. When I speak to you, it is quite another thing.'

'Oh la!' cried the little one, 'you are better with me then upon paper, than in the house!'

What she said was so true, I had nothing to reply; Oh, how rare is it in fact that one is the man of his book! how often does a writer say the contrary of what he thinks! how much oftener still does his actions give the lye to his writings! I have known poets whose verses breathed nothing but love, tenderness, and the sublimest sentiments, render their wives the most unhappy creatures in the world by their ill-humor and harshness.

'No Lolotte!' cried I—'no, my child! I wish on the contrary, to deal more kindly with you in my actions than in my writings. If any thing excite my anger, I will vent it upon paper; but in my behavior towards those I love, I will be good, easy, indulgent; I will excuse in them the faults against which I will rail in my writings.'

Lolotte looked at me with astonishment, for I spoke with a great deal of fire and pathos. At last she took my hand, and said to me tenderly—'good grandpapa, may I write all that to my Charles?'

'How foolish you are with your Charles! have done with that childishness!'

'Ah, grandpapa! would you say that of me in your book? you did not speak thus as I was coming in.'

'Yes, I will write it!' cried I, peevishly. 'Little impertinent, you shall read it word for word!

And I have kept my promise. I am however forced

to allow, although Lolotte herself is to read it, that the child was right, and that man is represented better upon paper than he is in real life. But it is very natural; and the more I reflect upon the duties of a writer, the more I think it ought to be so. With the pen, he speaks to humanity in general; and in his family, he is merely what man is in fact.

CHAP. II.

The window and the signal.

'Good god! how years pass away! and what a difference between one period and another!' exclaimed I one morning, as I had just looked over some pages of my journal.

I laid down the leaf I held, and reflected upon past times. Hardly could I believe that it was myself who had written it. I strove to retrace to my imagination the sentiments which I had then felt. The recollection of one circumstance recalling and developing a crowd of others, by little and little my ideas cleared up, and the picture of my juvenile days presented itself to my mind with a good deal of precision.

There was nothing to interrupt the sweet meditation—I was alone: my wife and Lolotte were gone into an adjoining field to look at some flax. My bosom was oppressed, and my heart throbbed. I opened the window to respire more fully. Every thing I beheld was so perfectly in unison with my thoughts! On one side the Church, where, for so long a time, I have addressed my

vows and prayers, along with those of my beloved parishioners, to the Supreme Being; on the other, the village inhabited by good and simple hearts, of which I am the guide and the friend.

It was a day of work: no idler appeared in the street; but in the neighbouring fields was heard on all sides the sound of labor enlivened by songs. Before me, at the end of the forest, was another village, that I could no longer distinguish with the naked eye; but taking my spy-glass, I soon, thanks to its assistance, discovered the red roof of the parsonage, under which formerly lived my spouse, and the little window from which she used to make me signals with a white handkerchief, to which I would reply by returning a thousand kisses. In an instant thirty-six years were effaced from my past life: I fancied myself once more at the very moment when the sight of the white handkerchief used to make my heart beat so delightfully; I saw my Augusta in all the graces of her form, so slender and so noble!—her luxuriant fair hair, her blue eyes, so mild and so expressive!—that complexion so fresh, so blooming!—that voice so harmonious and so tender!

'Oh my Augusta! my dear Augusta!' cried I, with emotion——

A little tap on the shoulder, and a broken voice which said to me—'What dost thou* wish my love? Here I am,' drew me out of this species of raptures.

I turned about. It was my wife, who was come back from the field of flax. A matron's habit enveloped her fuller form, now a little bent; a large projecting cap covered her hair, of which a few silvered locks hung down upon a forehead and temples in which the traces of the hand of time were preceptible. But was it not still my Augusta?—If her eyes be less brilliant, yet do they still regard me with affection?—If her lips be faded, yet do they not still pronounce the words of love and peace?—The illusion vanished; but the soft emotion which it had produced, remained.

* In Germany, as well as France and other countries on the Continent, the second person singular is always used in familiar conversation. *Trans*

'What is it thou wert looking at with so much attention?' said she to me: 'is it our laborers?'

'What I was looking at! hold, my Augusta,' said I to her, putting the spy-glass into her hand, 'hold—look yonder!'

She looked, and replied—'I see nothing but the red roof of the parsonage of Hazenrode.'

'And that little window, my dear Augusta, from which thou used to give me the signal that invited me to come—from which thou used to see me run, all palpitating with joy and love, and from which thou used to come down so quick to meet thy well-beloved.'

She smiled.

'What art thou thinking about,' said she coldly, 'it is so long since all these follies? it is our flax thou must see: it is growing surprisingly: we shall have a fine crop.'

In saying this she sat down beside her little table, put on her spectacles, and resumed her work as usual.

Her cold reason had done what her presence had not been able to do—it gave me back my sixty years. I shut the window and sat down in silence.

I began in my mind to compare the beautiful and tender Augusta of the red house, with the good, quiet grandmother I had before my eyes; and I asked myself—'is it indeed the same person?

She kept silent also; and with the end of her knitting-needle, drew some insignificant strokes upon the table. On a sudden she broke silence, and said to me with tenderness—'what art thou thinking of, my dear friend? is it still of thy Augusta of former times? I was very wrong to recall the recollection of a folly. Thou wouldst not have thought of it if I was no more thy own Augusta.' And she stretched me out her hand.

I kissed this hand with as much transport as in the days of my first passion.

'Yes,' cried I, 'thou art, thou wilt ever be my Augusta—her I love better at present than I did even then! no, my emotion is not a folly! miserable should he be who, after thirty-six years of union and happiness, could behold without emotion the window from which he received the signal of love!'

We embraced each other, shedding delicious tears. She retired to her chamber and I to my study, well disposed to remember the events of my youth.

CHAP. III.

The young preacher.

Never perhaps did any young man find himself more isolated, more destitute of every connexion, than I was at twenty three. I returned from the university where I had been ordained. My father had been dead some time, and my mother soon followed him to the tomb. They were strangers, and had no relations in the duchy of Magdeburg, but the cousin at whose house we had dined with Gellert. This relation had taken upon him in my absence to collect my little patrimony; little indeed, for when he had sold all my father left, and paid all debts, there remained only fifty crowns; and three weeks after he too bid adieu to this world. I saw it was necessary to acquire some means of support before my fifty crowns were all spent. My projects and hopes did not go be-

yond a country parsonage, where I might enjoy a comfortable, peaceful life; but even for that it was requisite to have some interest: besides, I was rather too young to have the *charge of souls*. I determined therefore upon returning to the university, to continue my studies, and to live with the strictest economy, hoping that my learning and good conduct would induce my superiors to overlook my youth.

Agreeable to this plan, having returned, I hired a small room in the house of a pewterer, an honest man, who did not want natural good sense; and he became as fond of me as if I had been his own child. I saw nobody but him. Hitherto I had formed no acquaintance with any of the students; my father had expressly forbidden it, and my own inclination did not lead to it. I had gone through all the colleges, followed all the courses, studied a great deal at home, and was in fact tolerably learned for my age.

But my favorite science, that which was the continual object of my meditations, and of which I was not a little vain, was the knowledge of mankind. By dint of reading, comparing one century with another, and reflecting, I conceived myself qualified to divine the secret motives of all human actions. My reasons were excellent in speculations; though I know not how it happened that, after having drawn the most plausible inferences, the event never corresponded with what I had imagined. Far from being corrected by my ill success I attributed it to some unforeseen accident, or said it was to have been so, and began my study afresh.

Nothing in the world was less lucrative than this. My fifty crowns were going apace, and I began to think that I had better look for some person who would procure me a parish, than study mankind in my little room; but this knowledge might serve to get me a protector; and nothing appeared more easy.

'I will go to the rector who names the candidates,' thought I; 'I will present myself with that noble assurance which so much prepossesses in favor of him who solicits, that he cannot be refused. By the first words he speaks, I shall judge of his character, and conduct myself

I passed this night with as much transport as in the

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accordingly. If he be vain, I will flatter; if he be haughty, I will be humble; if he be a man of feeling, I will move him; if he be learned, I will consult him; if ignorant, I will astonish him. Oh, what a fine thing is the knowledge of mankind!"

I arrived then at this protector's, certain beforehand of obtaining all I should ask. From the moment I entered the antichamber, where I was forced to wait pretty long, my confidence began to abate; I was intimidated by every thing I saw; and the meanest footman, clad in his fine livery, awed me to such a degree by eyeing my threadbare black coat, that I scarcely dared to bid him announce me.

At length the folding door of a magnificent saloon is thrown open. My protector spoke. It was doubtless to ask me what was my business; but I was so petrified that I did not hear a syllable of his first words, by which I was to discover his character. I recovered, however, in a few minutes, sufficiently to stammer something in an humble tone about—parsonage—of a village—my studies—my circumstances.

It was replied that I was very young—that I should study sometime longer—that several of my seniors were unprovided—that all the parishes depending upon him were promised long before, &c. &c. &c, I could find no answer to objections that my knowledge of mankind had not enabled me to foresee; and I was forthwith dismissed, without bearing away with me the smallest hopes.

"I know mankind, it is true," said I to myself, going away; "but I have been deceived in myself—I am not fit for soliciting; it will be more honorable to push myself without protection, and owe my fortune merely to myself and to my virtues."

Full of this noble ambition, I returned to the pewterer's; but as, before Fortune paid me a visit, it would be necessary to procure a livelihood, I gladly accepted of the good man's offer to recommend me to his customers; whereby I got some pupils in the learned languages and history.

However, the desire of becoming a village minister only grew the stronger: I talked of it to my landlord continually. He advised me to make myself known by my sermons; and for this purpose to offer myself to the chaplains of the University, to preach in their place. The idea pleased me. I set myself down to compose sermons without loss of time; and now that I was to address the public, my knowledge of mankind was to be of wonderful use to me. As my aim was to produce a great effect, and astonish my hearers, I thought severity would inspire them with respect, and that an animated painting of the vices of the century, was the best mode of displaying my eloquence. I thundered therefore against the corruption of morals; and having nobody else to consult with, read my discourse to my landlord.

When I had done declaiming, he said to me, taking off his cap—"That is fine, mr. Bemrode—it is very fine to be sure; but I did not think you so wicked: you reprimand us at a sad rate."

'It is not I who am wicked, my dear landlord—it is all mankind. You see how well I know it.'

'That is what you will find a hard matter to persuade them,' replied he, shaking his head. 'I doubt when your sermon is over, whether you will be thought the only just and good-natured man in the world."

When I went up to my room, I reflected upon the opinion of my landlord, and was dismayed. By what right in fact did I, who was younger than the greatest part of my auditors, take upon me to load them with the weight of my severity, reproach them with their vices, and menace them with the judgments of God? what should hinder them from judging me in their turn? would my knowledge of mankind serve me for excuse?

It was too late to compose another sermon; I was to preach it the next morning: but I passed the whole

night in correcting and softening the most violent parts striving, by repeating them aloud, to impress on my memory the changes I intended to make. It was not until morning that I lay down through weariness, and slumbered a little; but racking dreams did not cease to hold me out to an irritated crowd. This uneasy sleep disturbed, more than it refreshed me.

The hour struck, and I set out for church with inexpressible anguish and beating of heart. Arrived in the vestry, I took out my manuscript, read over some passages of my sermon, and with my pencil again mollified some passages that appeared too harsh.

I ascended the pulpit. The congregation was numerous, and all eyes were upon me. I sat down during the singing of the psalms to peruse my manuscript, and make crosses over the sentences I wished to suppress.

At last I commenced. The first part, which was only the exposition, went on pretty well, and was listened to with a considerable degree of attention; but the more the auditory were disposed to be indulgent towards me, the more did I reproach myself for the rigor with which I was about to treat them: so that when I came to the second part, I was almost determined to alter every thing that bordered on reproof.

But not being prepared with what I wished to substitute, I became in a short time so confused that I knew not what I was saying If I cast my eye upon the manuscript, I saw nothing but crosses and erasures; every phrase was the contrary of that which preceded it. When I came to the application, which was the most vehement part, not being able to change it from one end to the other, I was willing at least to soften its effect by the inflection of my voice; so I threatened with hell, in a tone that would accord with the opening of paradise.

In short, never was a bad sermon more badly delivered.

I heard distinctly the grating murmur of dissatisfaction: some looked at me with affright, as if they considered me insane; others could not refrain from laughing. My confusion increased; and I, in order to be sooner done, read prayers full as badly as I had delivered the sermon, and ran to hide my shame and vexation at my pewterer's. He soon came home from church, and did not look too well pleased.

'Why did you speak so quick and so low?' said he: 'one could not hear a word.'

'I thank heaven for it,' said I, tearing my sermon. 'I shall no more be carried away by my knowledge of mankind.—I get nothing by it but affronts.'

I thought that during my life I should never dare to appear again in public, and that I should be pointed at as I walked along the streets. I shut myself up during some days; and when at last I ventured to go out, I saw that nobody took the least notice of me, and that my sermon was completely forgotten; so I soon began to forget it myself.

I resumed my lesson and studies; and some time after a circumstance of my life which does not belong to this chapter, occupied me entirely, dissipated every cloud, and rendered me during a year so happy, as to absorb every other idea.

CHAP. IV

The Widow

The circumstance alluded to having totally ceased, I desired more than ever to obtain a village ministry; and that good fortune happened to me at a moment and in a manner the most unexpected. I received an invitation to go and speak with the rector, whom I had not seen since the visit when he received me so coldly. He told me that he had his eye upon me ever since—that my patience, my good conduct, and my talents, merited a recompense—that the parsonage of the village of Eizebach was vacant—that it was in the nomination of the commune, which he had already prepossessed in my favor, and that I had nothing to do but to sign a request which this excellent man had prepared.

Three days afterwards I learned that I was admitted as a candidate with one more, and that a day was fixed on for me to preach my trial sermon. I was rejoiced, as may be well supposed. I went to thank my worthy protector, and entered his generosity on my journal.

I had begun to write a journal, in order to add to my knowledge of mankind, my own experience: until then my reason alone had served me to judge of the actions and secret motives of men, which I had generally found to be either interest or vanity. I racked my head in vain to comprehend what had attracted the favor of the rec-

tor toward me. I had not paid my court to him—he had nothing to expect from me—I knew of neither daughter nor neice that he had to provide for: at last, after having thought about it for a long time, I concluded that I owed his good graces to my own merit; 'or perhaps,' added I, *modestly*, 'he is one of those rare and generous men whose happiness it is to oblige others.'

I next thought of applying myself to my sermon. I reflected a great deal on the manner in which I should compose it to have the desired effect. I wanted to astonish and move the peasants of Eizebach; but how was I to accomplish my purpose?—'If I make a very plain sermon, entirely within their comprehension, they will say—'we could do as much ourselves;' and if I make a learned, elaborate discourse, they will not understand a word.'—In this embarrassment, after having long considered, I took the resolution of saying very common things in pompous language, and of mentioning abstract doctrines in familiar terms. This appeared to me to be the most ingenious mode.

When my sermon was finished according to this plan, nothing more remained but to read it to my landlord. He listened to it with attention; and after having told me again—'it is very fine, mr. Bemrode, there is nothing to be said against it,' he added, with his accustomed good sense—'but I know not what there is in this sermon: it produces upon me the same effect as if I saw an old coarse coat with fine new lace, or a very fine new coat with old tarnished lace.'

'That is the very thing,' cried I, embracing him, 'that is what I wanted to do, my dear landlord.'—And I explained my motives to him.

He shook his head, and when I had done, said—'I will not take upon me to say whether you are right or wrong, mr. Bemrode; but take care: it seems to me that all you do in this way does not succeed.'

I laughed, and persisted.

In fine, on Saturday arrived a sorry chaise-cart, con-

ducted by a peasant. I got into it, quite elated, with my manuscript in my hand, which I looked over as we went along.

After some hours journey, my conductor turned about, and showing me a village on the right—'there is Eizebach,' said he. I raised my head quickly, and viewed the corner of the world which was perhaps to become my country, the theatre of all the pains and pleasures of my life, and the spot where my ashes would repose in peace.

The village appeared to me to be very well situated: it overlooked a vast extent of country. In the front it was half concealed by a fine plantation of elms and limes. At one end was a large modern castle, belonging to the count of Rangard, lord of the place, who never lived there, as my guide informed me. I was very glad of it; and my mind fixed itself immediately upon the church and parsonage at the other end of the village.

An interior voice, which I took for a presentiment, said to me—'behold thy abode!'

We traversed a line of houses which formed the principal street of the village.

'Oh!' thought I, 'how many happy and unhappy beings do these cottages contain! oh! if I become their pastor, their guide, their friend, how pleasing will it be for me to teach them to merit their good fortune, and support their cares! here I shall join hearts and hands, and introduce little children into the christian church; here I shall instruct youth, close the eyes of the aged, console the afflicted.'—An extraordinary emotion affected my heart, and tears started in my eyes.

The peasants were at their doors; I was afraid of letting them see my weakness, and hid myself behind in the chaise.

'I will not always hide my tears from you,' thought I; 'and if I remain among you, often will they mix with yours. Unhappy he who would seek to deceive you—

who would not always present the simple truth to these children of nature.'

At this moment I felt the flush of shame suffuse my cheeks, on thinking of the sermon I held in my hand, and which I was going to deliver before them. In this sermon there was not a word, not a single word that suited them: in writing it I had thought of myself alone, and to impose upon them by my false eloquence. In a transport of indignation I took my manuscript, and tore it in two.—'No, no!' cried I; 'although I should say nothing else to-morrow, than "*I do not wish to deceive you*," I will not give you this imposture of a sermon.'

I have this sermon yet, torn through the middle. I never see the manuscript without blushing, nor this tear without a sentiment of satisfaction and self-commendation.

The chaise stopped before the parsonage, which was still occupied by the widow of the late pastor. She was an aged woman, of a pale countenance; but one that interested at the first look. She bade me welcome, and expressed her wish that that dwelling should become mine.

The good woman then led me to the garden, of which we soon made the circuit.

'It is little,' said she, 'as well as the house; but you will find that it is sufficient for happiness:—there are, besides, other possessions belonging to the parsonage, which yield a good income. I have lived here forty-six years with my dear husband, and my wishes never extended further.'

'Forty-six years!' replied I. 'Ah, madam! how sorry must you be to quit an abode to which you have been so long accustomed!'

'No,' answered she, with the calm tone of settled affliction—'no, sir: it is perfectly equal to me where I pass the few days that remain for me upon this earth.'

We entered the house, where she conducted me into a good room on the ground floor, which served for a parlor. We sat down.

'You bring a companion along with you, no doubt?' said she. 'May you live here as long and as happy as we have done! during forty-six years our union was never troubled for an instant.'

'What!' cried I suddenly, standing up, and joining my hands, 'what! you have during forty-six years enjoyed uninterrupted happiness! that, madam, is next to a miracle; and you, I believe, are the only person in the world who can say so much. With what respect,' added I, 'do I behold these walls, within which, during forty-six years, there has not been repeated any groan, any cry of sorrow.'

'I have not said that,' replied she with the same calmness, but with a more trembling voice: 'I have told you that, during forty-six years, our union had not been *troubled*. I do not call any thing *misfortune*, except what people draw down on themselves by not knowing how to live at peace with those who surround them. The crosses which God sends, are trials, and perhaps good fortune; at least they must be considered as such, although the heart be sorely wounded at the moment.—Here, in this very chamber,' continued she, and her voice trembled still more, while the tears followed each other down her withered cheeks, 'here, in this very chamber, by the small-pox, I have lost five lovely children. They died in the same week. I commenced the week with five children, and ceased to be a mother before its conclusion! in this corner expired the last, my eldest daughter, innocent and beautiful as the days of spring. She was eighteen, and was on the point of becoming a wife.—Ah, mr. Minister! she is happy, she is, the darling girl!—She has not to weep the death of her dear children—she has not survived her beloved. I was a wife and mother, and now I am nothing.—Behold me alone in the world! god has willed it; but he is so good, it will not be for a long time.'

And she raised her eyes toward heaven with the expression of an entire confidence. Her tears ceased to flow: she fancied herself already reunited to her hus-

band and children. I cannot express the effect this recital had upon me—her grief was at the same time so profound and so calm, and her resignation to the will of the Almighty so perfect. An involuntary impulse, such as I had never before felt, not even for her whom I thought I adored, made me fall at the feet of this respectable widow. I took her meager hand in mine, and kissed it twice with tenderness and respect.

'No,' cried I, 'no, you are not alone in the world! from this moment you have a son—a son who wishes to consecrate his life to render your old age happy. Worthy woman! be my mother—my beloved and respected mother! like you, I have no longer any relations; like you, I thought myself alone in the world. At present we are no longer solitary—I have a mother, and you have a son. Remain here with me, if heaven will have me stay; and how many things will I not have to learn of you! if ever the weight of misfortune fall upon me, I will come into this chamber where you have lost your five children, and I will suffer without repining.'

Excellent woman!—she looked at me, she listened to me with an air of such surprise and such emotion, without being able to articulate a word! in fine, tenderness got the better; she threw herself about my neck, shedding a flood of tears.

'A thousand times blessed mayst thou be, my son!' cried she: 'yes, I will live with thee—I will be thy mother here or elsewhere—I will quit thee no more: thou shalt close my eyes, and the little I possess shall be thine.'

We remained thus in silence some instants, I still at her feet, she with her arm upon my shoulder, her venerable head leaning upon my breast.

'I hardly expected,' said she to me, 'to find a son; yet you are so good to me, and I was so much afraid of you!'

'Afraid of me, my good mother! and why, I beseech you? has any body spoken to you concerning me?'

'Ah, yes! we were told a great deal of harm about you. Do you know why the gentleman who named you candidate for this place, thought of you?'

'No, my good mother: and I have been often thinking of it without being able to assign any reason, It is generosity, no doubt, or else from my good reputation.'

'Ah, quite the contrary!' replied she. 'One of his relatives also aspires for this place. He has not much talents; and the rector has named you to the commune, lest another should offer who would take it from his relation;—"because," said he'——

She hesitated and stopped, blushing a little.

'Because?—proceed, good mother! why are you apprehensive of telling me? am I not at present your son? should a mother hide any thing from her child? let us see—I will help you out.—Because I have less talents still than the friend of this gentleman?'

'That is the very thing,' said the good widow: 'but I see that he has deceived himself and us with respect to your talents, like all the rest. After having got you named, he spread about in the village, underhand, that you would be a very bad Pastor, harsh, severe, and negligent; and that as for preaching, you had never pronounced a sermon in public but once; and that so pitiful, so confused, so badly delivered, that not a soul could understand a word of it. All this is reported in the commune; and I am much afraid that you will be rejected.'

'Do not be afraid, my dear mother!' said I, taking her hand, and in my turn lifting my eyes toward heaven with confidence—'fear nothing! my brothers and sisters who are there above, will be our tutelary angels.—

they will protect me, who am the son of their good mother.'

She pressed my hand to her bosom, then said—'you have surely your trial sermon? read me some of it.'

I took out my torn manuscript, and shewed it to her smiling. I recounted both the history of my city sermon, and the motive that had made me tear this on coming into the village. From time to time she pressed my hand, and moved her head with a sweet smile. She requested me to read some extracts, and did not think them so bad as I had done myself.

The hour of retiring came: she showed me to my room. It had been that of her husband.

'Be of good courage!' said she: 'behold the chamber where, during forty-six years, a worthy pastor composed sermons for this village!'

She sighed with an air of resignation, and quitted me, squeezing my hand, and calling me her son.

This sentimental scene, this adoption, those five children, dead in one week, every thing I had felt since my departure from the city, had disposed me to a sort of emotion that bordered on enthusiasm. My heart beat rapidly; I respired with difficulty.

I opened the window. The profound silence of nature appeared to me like that of the tomb. The village clock, which was striking eleven, gave me a thrilling sensation: I fancied I heard the sound of the last trumpet. The night was obscure, but yet calm and fine; a few stars were seen hiding themselves, and appearing again through some light clouds, which redoubled their lustre. There were lights still in some houses in the village: they went out insensibly one after another. I imagined I then saw the souls of the five children of the widow fly off from the earth, and find her again in heaven, brilliant

with the purest glory. At the moment when the last light was extinguished, a cloud opened in the middle, and discovered a radiant star. I thought of the young girl of eighteen, innocent, beautiful, and on the point of being married. My eyes filled with tears. I looked at the shining planet, and I thought I beheld in its luminous rays the aerial form of the young girl, clad in a celestial robe. A few moments afterward, a sweet and plaintive song arose from a house in the village. It was a hymn that a woman was singing near the bed of a person in the last agonies of death. I know not if the voice were harmonious; but, at that moment, it appeared to me to be the concert of angels who were receiving the young girl into their heavenly abodes. I was no longer upon earth—my imagination, my thoughts, my entire soul, were lost in the immensity; a crowd of vague, but sublime ideas presented themselves to my mind. If I had been able to calm myself sufficiently to put them in order, and compose my sermon for the next day, never, perhaps, had there been one more eloquent; but all was confused in my heated imagination and perturbed mind. The singing ceased. I closed the window, threw myself on the bed, and put out my light. Fatigued with the journey, I was not long in falling asleep; nor did I awake until my mother came to rap at the chamber-door, and inform me that the bell was about to ring.

I dressed myself, and strove to collect my ideas for the sermon I was about to preach, of which I had not even the text. Impossible! my reflections on what had passed the evening before, occupied my thoughts too forcibly: I fancied I still heard the hymn of death, the sound of the clock, and that I saw the lights shine and disappear.

I opened my window, hoping that the serene air of the morning would dissipate the illusions of the night. I beheld an extended and superb perspective; I heard the bleating of the flocks, the songs of their shepherds the chirping of the birds, the awakening of all nature; but this spectacle, though it gave me an emotion of a differ-

ent kind from that of the evening before, did not clear up my thoughts, which were still absorbed by my sensation.

The hour struck, and I went to the church without knowing even upon what I was to preach; but full of confidence, and sure that I should be inspired, I ascended the pulpit without apprehension, and began to read prayers, slowly but with fervor. Opposite me, was my adopted mother, who frequently regarded me with tenderness, and more frequently still her humid eyes were turned to a particular part of the church. I followed her looks, and saw upon the walls five small female figures crowned with myrtle intermixed with leaves. In the middle of each crown was an initial letter in gold. I concluded that this was the place where reposed her five children. My heart was moved. I recollected my invocation of the preceding night, and renewing it mentally, I turned away my eyes: they became fixed upon the bible that lay open before me, and upon this passage—'*man is a stranger upon the earth.*' I took it for my text, and was surprised at the regularity and facility with which my ideas arranged themselves upon this subject. Alas! more than any one was I a stranger upon the earth! where I held to nobody but this worthy woman whom I knew but a few hours; but whose presence alone inspired me with a multitude of sublime reflections—resignation, piety, confidence in God, and moderation. She offered me the example of all the virtues. I spoke little of her, not to distress her; but a great deal of her husband and of her children.

'Yes,' cried I, pointing to the five crowns—'yes, man is a stranger upon this earth! he passes; and a few withered leaves, a little false gold, and the tears of a mother, are all that remain of his passage! But console thyself, afflicted mother! they have received the crown that will never fade: strangers in this land of sorrows, they only appeared in it an instant—they are in their own country.'

All the congregation burst into tears; I shed them myself abundantly: and when we have wept together

we are friends. After the service I passed into the vestry, where I was surrounded by the elders of the commune who embraced me, and vowed I should be their pastor.

I saw likewise my *worthy protector*, whom I had not remarked in the church: he came to me with an affable air, and said some words to me, which, God be praised, I have completely forgotten! I did not even think at that time how much he must have been piqued; my heart was too full of pleasing, tender sentiments; there was no room for any painful idea. I would at that moment have pardoned my greatest enemy; and consequently, the man who had not been able to injure me.

CHAP. V.

The country parsonage.

I WAS now impatient to see my good mother: I found her expecting me in our dwelling, where I received her cordial embraces, mingled with tears. She told me not to be uneasy about my establishment: the house was well furnished; she looked upon me as her son, and all she possessed was mine. She had only some distant relations, who were very much at their ease; and in depriving them of this little inheritance, she did not do them the smallest wrong. She even desired to make it over to me in form before the justice of the place immediately; but this I refused, in order that I might not give myself an air of distrust in her eyes, or in those of my parishioners an air of avidity. I assured her that I

accepted her benefits with filial gratitude, but begged her not to make any deed until I should return to settle myself along with her, which was to take place in a month.

Certainly I may do myself the justice to say that a single idea of personal advantage had never entered my head when my soul adopted her for a mother. Had I found her between four naked walls, covered with rags—were I possessed of treasures, or had I in the world but one halfpenny, the feelings of my heart would have been the same—I would have equally offered to share every thing with her.

Yet I must allow that I was far from the noble indifference I affected at present. From this moment I looked upon every thing around me with the eager interest of property: I went through the house from top to bottom, examining all the furniture, sitting down upon all the chairs, touching the beds and the window-curtains with a secret pleasure until now unknown.

My adoptive mother had profited so well of forty six years, and the wheel had so well turned, that her house was abundantly provided. She opened great presses full of linen. But why is man inclined as soon as he acquires some property, to wish for more? Why must the best sentiments be clogged with others that make us blush when we think of them?

Yes, I avow, and I blush still, that it was not without pain I saw her put by some of the finest table services to make presents to her female relations.

But this vile movement of avarice did but glance across my heart, which swam in joy. I had attained the goal of my wishes, and much beyond, since, along with my parish, I had found a good mother, and a house furnished from the cellar to the garret: I saw nothing in the future but a succession of happy days, without the least probability of evil. I do not think I ever made in my life a better repast than that my good mother and I partook of upon good shining pewter, which belonged to me.

After having chatted a long time about our future arrangements and plan of life, I went up again to my chamber, and threw my window open. The immense extent I had before my eyes, the church, the village itself, every thing in view seemed my property; and my eyes ran over all with a lively interest and inexpressible delight. If in the village street two peasants were talking together, I supposed they were praising my sermon, blessing their new pastor, and promising him tenderness and respect; and my soul expanded at the pleasing sight.

I was hardly adequate to all I felt; I found it necessary, to give a new turn to my ideas, and went out to take a walk.

But the enchantment followed me every where. The fields, the meadows, the woods, all appeared a new creation made on purpose for the pastor of Eizebach; and I would, I thought, have made the circuit of the globe, always saying it is for me, it is for my happiness all this exists.

To a beautiful day succeeded the finest of nights: the sky was thickly spangled with stars, which were no longer hid by any cloud, and I thought I saw myriads such as I never had seen but at Eizebach. Far from inspiring me, as before, with melancholy ideas, they seemed to me the illumination of a brilliant festival for my reception: I enjoyed it a long time, and did not return till late to the parsonage, where I was cordially received by my good mother. I was to go to the city early next morning, to make preparations for returning to my living: I therefore took leave of the widow, saying, which I sincerely felt, that the month I had still to pass at a distance from her, would appear very tedious.

I hastened, on my arrival, to inform my friend the pewterer of my success. This excellent man wanted likewise to contribute to my establishment, and give me several household utensils; but as the widow had more than I had occasion for, I refused all. He was hurt at it; and we separated with a little coolness, which made me accelerate my departure.

At the end of a month my chaise-cart arrived, into which I put my effects, and set out, full of impatience to see my mother, having employed the little money that was left after paying for my lodging, in buying some articles agreeable at her age. I had at this time no other idea than to quicken the pace of the peasant's heavy horses, and was anticipating the moment when casting myself into the arms of my dear mother, I should say to her—'behold me! I am yours as long as I breathe!'

I arrived, and as I drew near, saw the little court-yard of the parsonage full of people in black passing to and fro: there were some also at the windows; but I did not see my good mother. I shuddered—a frightful suspicion of the truth shot across my heart; it was soon confirmed. Scarcely had I alighted from my chaise, when I learned that the worthy woman had, the night before, been struck with an apoplexy, and was found dead in her bed.

Her relations, to the tenth degree, had assembled; they filled the house, and were already occupied in packing up all the fine linnen I had looked upon as my property. Some of them came to request me to permit two chambers to be made use of to hold the furniture that could not be carried away at once, until it was sent for.

I protest, and, after the confession I have made, I ought to be believed, that I felt not the slightest sentiment of regret for this inheritance, which escaped me at the moment I was going to enjoy it. My sorrow was all for the loss of the good mother, the tender friend, to whom I had become more attached in a single day, than many are during a whole life. Had I been able to redeem hers, not only by renouncing all her bounties, but by ceding her the half of my living, I would not have hesitated, although I should have drank nothing but water, eat nothing but dry bread, and slept upon straw: but these sacrifices were not in my power, and I had lost this good friend for ever.

I entreated her relations to dispose of my house; and

I entered, with emotion and respect, the chamber where they had deposited her coffin. I raised the lid—I lifted up the veil that covered her face: she was altered very little. It was the same paleness and perfect tranquillity —the smile of resignation; one would have said that she was asleep. I kissed her icy cheeks, while I shook with a holy tremor.

'Thus,' thought I, 'thus does death terminate all the pains of this life, calm all sorrows, annihilate all inquietudes! good mother! thou hast found thy five children again: the sight of their withered crowns no more shall cause thy tears to flow: but he whom thou hadst adopted now weeps over thy remains. Ah! may he at least inherit thy virtues, thy resignation! who can tell what awaits him in this dwelling, where, with so much fortitude, thou supportedst such heart-rending sorrows! if in my turn I suffer a share—ah! why should I be exempt from them?—I will go into the chamber, the corner where thou sawest thy five children die, and I will support all with thy noble courage: I will say to myself— 'It is here she closed the eyes of all she loved in the world; and soon shall I find somebody who will close mine too.'

Two of her heirs entered: they had an uneasy look.

'You know, doubtless, mr Minister,' said they to me, 'that the deceased has made no will, and that we are her natural heirs? we have been told here that she intended giving you all she possessed; she has told it to different persons. Have you no promise? do you wish to make any opposition?'

'None,' answered I; 'and it is not her property that I regret. Enjoy it with peace and happiness.'

Were this inheritance a crown, I would have said the same. I bent myself again over the coffin; I took one of the flowers with which it was adorned, gave a last kiss to the pale forehead of my respectable friend, and went with the relations to conduct it to its last home.

After the interment, I went into the schoolmaster's, and requested him to give me a bed in his house until I bought some furniture to settle in the parsonage. He knew the embarrassment under which I lay, and the reason why I brought nothing with me: the widow had not concealed her intention of giving me all she had. He expressed his regret that she had not written it. I do not know why, but I was pleased that she had not. I represented to myself all this family, deceived in their expectations, murmuring, perhaps, against that excellent soul who had deserved nothing but benedictions. No unworthy sentiment had followed her to the tomb; and I myself excited none for which I might have to blush. This sweet reflection consoled me much better than the inheritance would have done.

The next morning I learned that the relations had passed the night in filling their trunks, and that they were gone off with all the effects. The keys of the house were brought. I went to it, and found it empty: but the content I felt was not diminished. I exclaimed with Virgil, —'*I salute ye, oh my household gods!—here is my house and my country: let us pour out libations to Jupiter.*'

'My dear master,' said I to the schoolmaster, who had followed me, 'are not these tears the best of all libations?'

He did not comprehend me, but thought I was weeping at coming into a house so naked, for which he expressed his regret.

'No, my friend,' said I to him, 'a house is never empty when it is inhabited by a contented heart, by a mind at peace with itself and with all the world. Are not these the best furniture? what signifies how one is lodged for a few moments? we enter our first dwelling entirely naked; we take into the last but a sheet and a useless cushion; and yet we torment ourselves to have more than is necessary during the short interval that seperates the two epochs.

'That is well said,' worthy parson, replied the honest schoolmaster; 'but you want, nevertheless, a bed and a

few chairs. I have spoken of your embarrassment to the chiefs of the commune: and——but I see them coming,' said he, looking into the court-yard.

I stepped forward, and saw a crowd of men, women, and children, laden with different pieces of furniture and utensils, each brought something; and in an instant my house was furnished above my wants. It was little for each—it was more than sufficient for me; but I would have afflicted and wounded their hearts by refusing them; I had not even a thought of it; and the soft tie of benefits and gratitude henceforth attached us to each other.

My good parishioners had also brought me provisions for some days. I had my plain dinner served up under two fine chesnut-trees before the door. If the remembrance of that I had found so good along with my mother had not been so fresh, never would a king have made a better. I had scarcely done, when, for my dessert, the farmer of the glebe came with a quarter's rent: —then I thought myself rich, and at home indeed. I took possession of the house and garden, of my chamber, and superb view.

With what pleasure did I behold the prospect! how did every surrounding object accord with the emotions of my soul.

It was a holyday. I could see from my window every body in the village in motion, or enjoying a sweet repose: the domestics were coming and going; the children, neatly dressed, were playing about under a large lime-tree; some young people of both sexes were dancing, and walking arm in arm; the woman were chatting together before their doors, while groups of peasants, seated upon benches or trunks of trees, were smoking, enjoying the fine evening, and looking at the sky to guess the weather of the morrow. At a distance was heard the tinkling of the flocks grazing in the pastures.

All these rural scenes were so new to me, and yet so familiar! I had the image at the bottom of my heart;

it was the recollection of my childhood. I thought of my virtuous father, and I promised my parishioners to set them also the example of the virtues I was going to preach. There was not in my heart a spark of hatred towards any being upon earth, not even the slightest bitterness. I could, without any exaggeration, have said at that moment, to all I met—'love me as I love you!' and if an opportunity had presented itself, I firmly believe there was no magnanimous action, no sacrifice for the good of my fellow-creatures, of which I would not have been capable. If there exist a mortal who has not known one of those moments when the whole soul is devoted to virtue and the love of our neighbor, may that man never cross my threshold! as for myself, my head and heart were affected in such a manner, that I felt the want of some air.

I went out, but I did not chuse to traverse the village: every man I might meet, were he the best of men, would have mixed something terrestrial with my sensations; and I wished to enjoy that state which seemed to lift me above human nature: I wandered, therefore, alone through the country. But at the end of half an hour I was, as it were, forced by an irresistible attraction to return to the house. I entered my chamber as I would a temple; I felt a perfect calm, or rather a kind of voluptuous languor. I did not reflect at all; I had not even any distinct thoughts; my soul was like an unruffled sea, whose surface reflects a thousand fantastic images, but that which predominated and insensibly effaced all the rest, was that of a father of a family. I fancied I saw in every corner of my room feminine beings, more beautiful than angels, hovering around me. What I felt did not appear to me in the least connected with the senses, nor to have the smallest relation to real life: my heart was full of love; but of a love so pure, so celestial, that I exclaimed—'no, it is not a woman I desire; it is an intellectual being, divested of all the weaknesses of humanity—it is one of those angels I *think* I see flying about me.' I bewildered

myself in chimerical ideas; I formed projects of happiness without a determinate object: I thought no longer of the pleasure of being possessor of a house, but of that of inhabiting it with this angelic being, created on purpose for me.

How weak is man, and how little does he know himself! I was in the acme of my sentimental delirium when the schoolmaster's daughter entered the chamber to arrange something. She had nothing at all remarkable but a tolerably good shape and easy carriage; but at the moment she seemed to me to realize the dreams of my imagination; and all the celestial figures I thought I had seen in the chamber, disappeared, to give place to the schoolmaster's daughter. I blush to tell that it cost me an effort to quit the room. I remained some time at the door to look at her: by degrees, however, the illusion dissipated, and I saw her such as she really was; and, when she passed by me, wishing me a good evening, I had not the least desire to detain her: but she had removed the veil with which my imagination had covered my sensations: I was ashamed to perceive that it was a woman I wanted, and not an angel.

At first I was humiliated by this discovery; but why should I be so, at feeling what all men feel, what god implanted in their hearts for the consolation of life? oh nature! I thank thee for having created me like unto my brothers, for having given me the desire of doubling my existence by taking a companion! may I find her good and gentle!—may she love me as I feel I can love her! and my happiness will not be imaginary.

CHAP. VI.

The Marriage.

Some days passed over amid the illusions of my fancy, the wishes of my heart, and the reflections of my reason, which tranquillized me a little; but even when the violence of agitation subsides, there still remains a something of those moments of enthusiasm, virtue, and sensibility which I had experienced. The first days of my establishment have rendered me better: I never think of it, even at present, without feeling at least the desire of realizing the vows I then made, to be the best of pastors, of husbands, and of fathers.

After a residence of some time, I was requested to preach in a neighboring village, in the room of an old minister who had been sick, and was not yet perfectly recovered: it was very near Eizebach; so I went thither on foot, where I found the wife of the pastor waiting for me in the garden. She welcomed me with particular civility, rejoiced at our good neighborhood, and said a thousand flattering things.

Before I entered the house, I had already known that they had but two children, a son and a daughter; that they were in easy circumstances, and that their daughter would have a pretty fortune. She had also enquired of me whether I had not a notion of marrying. In fine, it was clear she had views towards the settlement of her daughter; and this idea rendered me reserved and ill-humored. I was confirmed in it on going into the par-

lor, where she introduced me: her daughter was there, decked out in her most shining attire, and blushing up to the eyes when I saluted her, which she returned with an air of the greatest embarrasment.

The minister entered. He was a good-looking old man, with a fine venerable countenance. He bade me a friendly welcome, without the least affectation; but I saluted him with great coldness, being bent upon seeing every thing in an ill light. I persuaded myself that I saw in his features and his smile, an air of irony, avaricious and wicked. The mother, with her over-strained politeness, appeared an insupportable flatterer. I saw nothing in the young women but a few freckles, which were thrown up by a skin extremely white, and her modest silence seemed nothing but sulkiness.

Every thing seemed arranged so as to give me a great idea of the prosperity of this family. Upon the coffee-table, covered with a snowy cloth, was a porcelian equipage, with handsome silver spoons. The mother, on different pretexts, opened a large walnut cupboard, in which were displayed at least a dozen services, and two elegant silver candlesticks. Every time this cupboard opened, I turned away my eyes. The old man always smiled. At length he said—'but what is the matter to-day, wife? every thing wears a look of festival and formality! is it a birthday, or something of the kind? your daughter is dressed out as if she were going to be a godmother!'

The young girl turned the color of a rose, and cast down her eyes. Her mother stammered some words about her dear neighbor that was expected; and the dear neighbor only became more cold and reserved.

The young woman went out for something; and scarcely was she outside the door, when her mother commenced an endless panegyric upon her economy, her diligence, her virtues, &c. &c.

'Well done!' thought I to myself, 'each acts their part: her parents have told her—'you will go out, and then we can begin to praise you.'

I answered not a word; and the good mother went on, extolling the qualities of her daughter to the skies.

'But, wife,' said the old man, 'what good herb have you trod upon this morning, you say so much good of our Augusta, though in general you find something to blame in her?'

'Trifles!' replied she, reddening, 'mere nothings! I have never any occasion to reprove her.'

'It is not for that I blame you, my dear; quite the contrary. However notable and gentle our daughter be, she has her defects; and it belongs to her mother to check them.'

'How! what defects has she then?' replied the good dame: 'for my part, I know of none.'

'I mean to say,' answered he with mildness, 'that she is not yet half so economical, so notable, so charitable, so pious—so good a woman, in one word, as her mother: that is all I would say, my dear friend.'

He then turned towards me, and proposed some questions in theology, which I hastened to answer, in order that I might escape the importunities of his wife; and I prolonged the conversation until the moment of going to church.

'Augusta goes there likewise,' said the mother; 'for nothing in the world would she miss it, she has heard so much of your sermons!'

I am afraid that a sign of impatience escaped me, and I made haste to take the path to the church, without waiting for miss, whom I saw arrive soon after with her psalm-book in her hand.

I ascended the pulpit. Miss Augusta was placed before me, and I must acknowledge she looked extremely well. I could the more easily examine her, as she had her eyes down, and did not take them from off the book.

When the singing began she raised them up—her beautiful blue eyes! at the same time that her pretty mouth, half opened, breathed such sweet harmonious sounds! her head was a little inclined; her attitude had an indefinable grace, and her countenance an expression that embellished it extremely. I could not turn my eyes away from her; and hers were fixed upon me the moment the sermon began, and quitted me no more till it was finished; but it was very easy to perceive that devotion alone occupied her.

My prepossession against her diminished every minute and I was resolved to offer her my arm on leaving church; but she had gone before me, and I could not overtake her.

'It must be allowed that she is charming,' said I, returning alone; 'but it is all equal—she will make no impression on my heart.'—That heart grew harder at every attempt that was made to render it more tender. I was scarcely entered, when the mother recommenced the eulogium of her daughter; but she strove in vain to make her give her opinion of my sermon—miss Augusta observed silence. If I had not seen her so sweetly attentive and collected, I would have believed she had not listened to it, or that it had displeased her: I was sure of the contrary, but I wanted to arm myself against her; and I took her refusal for obstinacy, unpoliteness or awkwardness.

The mother had determined upon attacking me in every shape. I was obliged, in spite of myself, to follow her from top to bottom of the house, to look at all her rooms, all her treasures, all she intended to give her daughter when she got married.

'You give yourself needless trouble,' thought I, following her: 'all these fine things will not tempt me. I was really piqued at the projects she had formed upon me before she knew me; they did not in the least

flatter my self-love: and all the family falling upon me at once, inspired me with an antipathy I did not seek to disguise.

I saw beforehand an excellent dinner, which was prepared on my account, and served to display the tallents of miss Augusta; but I was resolved to taste every thing without approving of any, and to speak of nothing but orthodoxy with the old pastor, who, taken altogether, was the person that disppleased me least.

In fine the mother having shown me all the fortune of her daughter, said to me—'a wise man will not consider riches; but when they accompany merit, it is so much the better. A pastor, especially, should not begin housekeeping in debt, were he to lie upon straw: but it is much better to sleep upon good beds when one can. A good pastor should likewise have a helpmate; and, no doubt cried she, smiling, 'it will not be long before you have one You have already, perhaps, chosen one in your heart?'

'You have guessed it, madam,' said I to her, bowing: 'that choice is made long since.'

'Ha! ha!—long since!' replied she; 'the wedding will be soon then?'

'Since you have the goodness, madam, to take some interest in my welfare, I acknowledge it is true.'

I expected a total change in her manner; but, to my great astonishment, the good woman took my hand with an affectionate look, saying—'since it is so, dear neighbor, I pray god for you and your spouse! love each other well, and live in peace and good understanding to the grave! we have been told that you were a good, worthy young man—that your conduct at the university was excellent; your parishioners of Eizebach cannot praise you sufficiently. A good reputation and a good conscience, these are what is requisite to obtain the benediction of heaven! you will have it, my child; for a good marriage is the first of blessings, the great-

est happiness god can grant to man upon earth : and, if it please heaven, your wife will be as good, will render you as happy, as——'—she stopped to dry up some tears—' as I have striven to make my husband.'

Then without minding to show me any thing else, she led me down stairs ; and, on going into the parlor, informed her husband and daughter that I was going to be married. The old man looked at his wife with a triumphant smile, and complimented me in the kindest manner. I was horribly embarrassed with my falsehood.

'Now, my dear,' said he, 'let us go to table : I shall dine with a better appetite, and Augusta too, I will engage for it.'

Dinner was served. The timid, silent Augusta was become very conversable : she spoke of my sermon, of which she could give the analysis, and defended it with warmth against some criticisms of her father. There was mention also of my pretended marriage, and my embarrassment was attributed to love. The health of my future spouse was toasted with cordiality ; a serene gaiety reigned among us, which rendered the repast infinitely agreeable. At the dessert, the good old man said to his wife—'well now, mother, would we be at our ease as we are with neighbor Bemrode, if we did not know what we do? ever since you had taken this affair into your head, we were constrained and uneasy —and this little girl more than any body. I have told you, my dear, that secret and intricate ways are good for no purpose. I will say it frankly, you have appeared to me all day to act and speak with deceit, as if you were rehearsing a dramatic part; and I do not like that.'

Surprised at the excessive candor of the good man, confounded at my situation, I cast down my eyes—after having, however, stolen a look at the young girl. More confused still, she was turning pale and red alternately, and from time to time raising a suppliant look to her father, which he did not seem to notice.

'No, indeed,' replied his wife, 'no, I did not mean deceit! I would have desired with all my heart that it might happen;—it is otherwise: well and good, we must console ourselves. I will never be deceitful—no, although our Augusta were to remain with us always. But was there any harm in——'

'In aiding providence a little,' interrupted the minister, laughing, 'by little round about ways? my dear friend, what god pleases always happens without man interfering! no doubt, we cannot help wishing for what we think may suit us; but then, why take two roads?—why not wait until we know each other better; and, if we agree, speak with sincerity? if he be an honest, upright man with whom one has to do, he will, on his side, act in the same manner: we know then what we have to rely upon; and if he say no, we will not love him the less. If he be wicked or dissimulating, he does not merit a thought, and we can leave him there.'

I was still more astonished and confused at the turn the conversation had taken, and I knew not what face to set upon it. Poor Augusta was really in a state of suffering: the tears fell drop by drop from her downcast eyes. She would have wished to go out, but her father, beside whom she was placed, and who appeared to love her tenderly, at one moment held her hand in his, at another put his arm around her waist. The mother, naturally inclined to babbling, would not yield.

'Say what you will,' answered she, 'the men know nothing about it. A person may desire a thing, and yet not say it openly. Ask Augusta—ask all the young women in the world, if those things are to be declared.'

'And what do you say, Augusta?' said the father.

'Mother is right,' replied she, without lifting her eyes. 'But, dear father, do you not wish me to go for another bottle of cider?'—and she rose up, enchanted at having found this pretext.

'In a moment,' answered her father, laying his hand upon her arm to make her sit down. 'I tell you, my daughter, that, in the present instance alone, your mother is not right; you are not a good judge of the matter. You who have desired nothing—oh! nothing at all!—I know it well—you could not, nor ought you, say any thing——'

'Dear father!' cried Augusta with a suppliant voice.

He looked at her with tenderness, patted her gently on the cheek, and said—'it is very well at present; I have no more to say. Go, bring two sparkling bottles of cider.'

'She did not wait to hear the command repeated.

When she was gone out, turning to me, he said—'my dear colleague, I am disposed to believe what your countenance declares—that you are good, frank, and sensible. You will not think little of us, then, if I tell you freely that, in consequence of all the good we have heard of you, we desired that you would become our son-in-law, because we desire the happiness of our Augusta, who, I dare say at present, merits all the praises her mother bestowed upon her. God has not willed it—well and good! you are engaged; we shall not the less be good neighbors and good friends: is it not so?'—and he stretched me his venerable hand across the table.

Shame for my falsehood, and the emotion of tenderness caused by his frankness, tied down my tongue. I did not dare to speak; but I squeezed his hand, I pressed it with my lips, and I wet it with my tears.

'Well, now you see, mother,' said he, withdrawing it to wipe his own eyes, 'I have told him what we desired, and behold us all three in tears! he will be our friend, although he cannot be our son, and his wife will be our second daughter. Have I not done well in speaking to him, as I could have wished to have done at first, instead of what you have been doing all day? this worthy man

would have answered—'I have a spouse;' and all would have been settled. I do not comprehend, I assure you, how you have been able to resist the prayers of your child, who conjured you on her knees not to take any step to bias our neighbor, but to leave all to providence.'

The old lady bursting into tears, threw herself on her husband's neck, crying—'I was in the wrong, my dear friend! but are you not likewise in the wrong at present to commence this discourse?'

'No,' replied he, 'no, I have perceived very plainly that this worthy man remarked every thing you did to attract him. Should I let him think that our discreet and modest Augusta was in the plot, and quit our house as he would a den of robbers? god be praised that he has a spouse! we may now speak.'

'Dear friend, I was much to blame!' said the mother, embracing him, and weeping again.

He embraced her also, and said—'at present, let us speak no more of it. Recall your daughter.'

'Stop a moment!' cried I. 'My heart and my hand are at liberty—give me your daughter:—if she can love me, I shall be too happy!'

The mother regarded me with astonishment and joy, the father with a cold, serious look.

'What am I to believe, neighbor?' said he to me: 'have you not told my wife that you are engaged? ah, I see how it is!—you have found but this means of escaping her persecutions. Is it not so? have I not guessed it?'

I was completely ashamed of my ungenerous deception.

'You have thought me simple and good,' said I, coloring; 'I fear you will think me false and wicked. I cannot comprehend myself what has passed within me, nor how I have been capable of being displeased at what constitutes at present the object of my wishes!'

'We must well pardon you,' said he, laughing, 'since I have pardoned my wife!—well, then, my dear neighbor, you ask me for my Augusta: you know already that it was our desire; it remains for you to endeavor that it be that of our child likewise. She deserves all your attachment—obtain hers. Come often to see us. I give you my promise that she shall not know a word of what we have just said; and three months hence we will resume this conversation. It requires time to become well acquainted with one another; and, trust my experience, these three months will neither be the worst nor the longest of your life.'

He rung the bell, and his charming daughter re-entered with two bottles: she had still an embarrassed air, and her eyes moistened; but she found her father and me plunged in a theological dissertation, and by little and little she became composed.

After dinner, while the old parson was taking his afternoon's nap, and the mother was busy in the house, Augusta and I went to walk in the orchard, and thence into the country. I beheld her in quite another light:—her freckles had disappeared, or gave more expression to her lovely countenance. I saw nothing now but her innocence, her large animated blue eyes, her smiling little ruby mouth, and her teeth so white and even!

We came to a narrow path; she went foremost, and I regarded with rapture her graceful form, and firm light gait. My heart was deliciously affected; it was still more so when walking beside each other, with her pretty arm leaning on mine. She spoke to me of her infancy, of h.. parents, of her father above all, with a tenderness, a respect, a devotion that I cannot express: her eyes sparkled with filial love; and it was with difficulty I could keep myself from speaking of another love she might have read in mine.

The three months passed, in fact, like lightning. Until then I had not known the real passion of love; for I will not give that name to the seduction into which I was inveigled by a coquette, it is so easy at twenty-three to

mistake for love a vanity flattered, or the delusions of the senses. But what I experienced for Augusta was very different: it was a sentiment so true, so pure, that it possessed my soul, and gave me a new existence. In her society I never thought of shining, or of displaying wit; but I felt the desire of acquiring all the virtues.

And why should I not avow it? this love also reanimated my faith and my hopes. I there discovered the certitude of bliss, not only for this life, but for that which is to come. My studies, my reflections, my uncertain cold philosophy had afforded but vacuity and doubt; while love, penetrating my soul with an ardent and celestial flame, dissipated the obscurity. The horror of the tomb, the dread of annihilation, the gloom of futurity, all disappeared; every idea was cleared up by a refulgent light: I felt that the being to whom heaven has imparted love, must be immortal—and eternity was mine!

We were not married until the spring following. The father of Augusta gave us the nuptial benediction, and his daughter became the most adored of wives.

The morning after our wedding we escaped from visits and from visitors, and stealing away through the garden, took the road to Eizebach. With what rapture did I conduct my Augusta to my house, *to here!* what a delightful walk! my Augusta, my companion and my friend, the dearest half of my existence leaning on my arm, pressing it to her softly-agitated heart!

When we entered the grove, Augusta leaned her head upon my bosom. I embraced her with ardor; and thus bestowing on each other a thousand caresses, we arrived at our simple abode.

'Blessed be thou,' cried I, leading her in, 'thou who comest to grace it! behold thee under thy own roof! behold our chamber! and unto the end of our days will we inhabit it together.'

How beautiful did this chamber appear! it was the

temple of love, and my knees, upon which I placed my Augusta, the throne of happiness! A hut would have appeared to us the same—a palace would have appeared nothing more.

The summer of life is past, yet is my cottage still the temple of love and happiness! we have shed tears in it; but what mortal sheds none? ours, at least, were never the tears of spite, humiliation, envy, or disgust. I stop, for I hear my Augusta coming. Her step is slower than it was then; but the sentiment that guides her is still the same; and I see her enter like an angel from heaven who brings me peace, happiness, and benediction.

CHAP. VII.

My wife.

I COULD wish the reader had known her at the time she became my wife; he would spare himself a smile of pity at the title of this chapter, and me a multitude of words: but these words—I like to say them; and perhaps among my readers there may be some happy enough to like to read them, and to smile with pleasure: therefore shall I retrace those lines so dear to my remembrance.

I hardly then knew my Augusta better than the reader knows her now. I knew, like him, that she was a young girl, fresh and blooming, agreeable, pretty, gentle, and good-natured. I had heard that she played the harpsichord, but I had no great opinion of her talents,

(for,' thought I, 'would she have neglected making it known to her lover? and I have never once heard her. And her father, who is so fond of her, who loses no opportunity of showing her excellence, would he not have let her take away her instrument? and there never has been a word about it.'

Three months after our nuptials, happened my wife's birth-day. On going out of our bedchamber in the morning, we found a fine piano-forte lying open in the next room, with a book of music on the desk, of which the words were couplets composed by my father-in-law for his daughter. Augusta uttered a cry of joy and surprise. We both went in to read them. The music seemed to me to be composed expressly for the words.

Augusta sat down, and deciphered it in an instant. She first played the symphony and air with the nicest precision: her nimble hand ran lightly over the notes; then her vermilion lips opened to sing the verses with a voice exquisitely melodious. She was soon too much affected to continue; but she went through the air. Then she came and threw herself into my arms. She smiled, while she removed the tears with her pretty hand. I was in raptures.

'What!' said I, exulting, 'such a talent, my Augusta—and only now that I know it?'

'You could have no pleasure in knowing it, my Charles,' she replied, 'when I had no instrument, when I could have none. Listen to me, my love!' said she, perceiving I was going to speak; 'I love music; I am passionately fond of it: my father is equally so; it is he who has been my master, and the best of masters. A harpsichord is so dear! and my parents have already expended so much money for my wardrobe, I have not wished that they should buy one, nor that my father should deprive himself of his, which he surely would have done. Neither are you, my Charles,' said she, putting her hand to my mouth, 'rich enough for the whims of your Augusta. What have I done then? as soon as

our marriage was resolved upon, I ceased to practise. When my father complained of it, I answered—'dear papa, mamma is right in saying that music is not fit for a married woman; and I wish to accustom myself to do without it. He spoke to me no more on the subject, and there is the reason you heard nothing about it. At present I am at a loss to know how this good father has managed to buy me an instrument: but I enjoy deliciously such an unexpected recovery of the charms of music, and the pleasure of practising beside you: it is an additional means of pleasing my Charles.'

She embraced me again, and ran to her piano, on which she played divinely for more than half an hour, and ended with an adagio that terminated like life, in a sigh.

At ten o'clock our parents arrived. Augusta threw herself into the arms of her father, without being able to articulate a syllable.

'Ha, ha! little girl!' said he to her, laughing, 'your thought to impose upon your old father; but he guesses every thing, especially the heart of his daughter. I knew very well your motive for depriving yourself of music during four months, so I said nothing; but at last I grew displeased at not hearing my scholar any more. Come, madam, let us hear if you have not forgot. Do credit to your master: the time lost must be repaired, and you can practise now both at the father's and at the husband's.'

Oh! why could the reader not have beheld how much the father and daughter were in that moment superior to the husband and young wife! how much paternal and filial love, exalted as it then was, excels the other! Augusta on her knees before her father, kissing his respectable hand over and over; the good old man pressing her in his arms; the mother all in tears, joining in their sweet caresses: the whole scene had something celestial in it, and I would have been afraid of disturbing it by the obtrusion of my sentiments.

Augusta went into the chamber with her mother, and I remained with my father-in-law, to whom I recounted my agreeable surprise, while he laughed as he listened to me.

In a moment I saw my wife come in, pale, agitated, and bathed in tears. She threw herself at the feet of her father with redoubled tenderness: she kissed his hand, and clasping her own, exclaimed,—'oh best! oh dearest of fathers! I know at present—I know—'—and sobs choaked her utterance.

Her mother followed. She was affected also. The old man disengaged his hands, laid one upon the forehead of his daughter, and with the other, made a menacing gesture to his wife, saying—'*babbling creature!*' at this the mother drew near, and said—'yes, my dear friend, I have told Augusta all! should not your child know how much you love her? look, now, are we not the happier? you shed tears of delight, and our daughter, and myself, and our son-in-law.'

I wept also, without knowing what had happened.

The father replied, laughing, in the same tone as his wife—'and all the parish weeps too, perhaps! and the duchy! and the empire! and the heavens! and the earth! what a fine history you are telling us! you must know, my son, quite simply what it is. Augusta has abstained, during three months, from touching a single note of music, although it cost her a great deal. She told me that she cared for it no longer: but I have not been her dupe; I saw very clearly that it was in order to avoid taking my harpsichord from me. Well, I kept it then; but I wished to entrap her in my turn, and undergo my little privation: so, instead of four glasses of wine that I usually took, I have only taken one every day these three months. I said, too, that I did not care any longer for it—that it disagreed with me; and in this manner I have saved a score of crowns. Some other little economies have made up the rest of the sum, and I bought this piano; and thus have I contrived to take

my revenge, and deceive madam Augusta. Behold, my dear son, the cause of all these wet eyes! do you think it of so much consequence?'

It was thus I learned that my wife was an excellent musician: I learned in a similar way many other things still, which her innocent modesty had left me ignorant of, and which rendered me excessively vain of my Augusta. My only regret was, that all our neighbors did not know how much my Augusta was truly amiable, and had no other opinion of her than what I myself had entertained at first. The greater the number of strangers about her, the more silent and timid did she become. It was for me alone—it was in the intimacy of our sweet union that the folds of her innocent, enlightened, and virtuous soul, opened out insensibly to my eyes.

Each day I made some new discovery, and each day augmented my attachment. Thus the botanist, in seeking after flowers unknown, examining them with care, discovers beauties and properties, and often the sweetest perfume, and enjoys with pride every new plant he finds in his course: but he loves to make known his treasures, and mine wish to remain concealed. She was generally thought to be only simple, quiet, and good. Pleasantry is one of the powerful means of shining in conversation, My wife had a noble, serious turn of mind, remote from this species: besides, she detested every thing which had the least tincture of scandal; and too often is it at the expense of others that people amuse themselves.

Her modesty prevented her speaking upon subjects of the higher kind.—'I had rather,' said she, 'listen to those who know more than I do, and not humiliate those who are perhaps ignorant of what my father has taught me.'

There remained then none but the topics of a trivial nature: these she did not like; so that she scarcely spoke at all.

When I reproached her with it, she answered—'dear

Charles, a little longer, and these lips will lose their freshness, and these cheeks will turn pale, and the lustre of these eyes will vanish!'

'But, my dear Augusta, it is not of that I wish to speak; it is of thy wit, of thy judgment, of thy acquirements.'

'Oh!' replied she, smiling, 'what issues from lips of twenty is always so well expressed—so wise—so witty! I know, I assure thee, that I possess nothing to make my discourse be admired, when it will be no longer embellished by the magic of youth. Dost thou know the wife of pastor Muller?'

'Who? that old ill-humored woman?'

'Old! she is only thirty-six.—But, tell me—what dost thou think of her?'

'I believe her a tolerably good house-wife, disagreeable enough, and—that is all!'

'Well then, my father, who knew her when she was young, says, that she was handsome, that she was amiable, and had not only a great many admirers, but also many friends who were fond of her conversation.'

'It is inconceivable! there remains not the smallest trace. I cannot comprehend that this woman could ever please.'

'Nor can I; yet my father protests there is nothing more certain.—'But,' said he to me, 'such is the frightful result of poverty, of the cares that attend it, of the vexations of every kind to which it is exposed, that they destroy beauty in the end, stifle wit, take away even that flower of delicacy and sensibility that renders a young girl so amiable. The compliments of gallantry, agreeable flattery, and confidence in one's self, excite gaiety, and develope the ideas; but once that corroding sorrows, that inquietudes of every kind trouble the mind, and wrinkle the forehead of a woman, all those

advantages disappear, and with them also both flatterers and adorers, and sometimes even friends:—the poor thing perceives the change, and regret, sadness, and despondency increase! for several years mrs. Muller has been totally occupied with the cares of her house and numerous family: all that does not adorn the mind, and render one amiable in the eyes of every body; but she is so without doubt in those of her husband and children: and is not that sufficient, my Charles?' demanded she, with an enchanting smile. 'I am not ambitious of any other glory: and were I, as thou sayest, amiable for the world, who can assure me that, in some years, I shall not be like mrs. Muller? and why should I seek after such fleeting advantages?'

What my wife expressed at that time, was reason itself. Since then I never behold an aged woman without reflecting—'and thou, likewise, hast seen thy fine days;' and without attempting to recall them to her mind, I strive to give her to understand, by a few civil expressions, that it is easy to perceive it still; and always I am paid by a sweet smile and a benediction.

Enough about my wife. She had her faults, no doubt; I believe so at least, for every being has its own.

CHAP. VIII.

Apology for my book.

The apology of a book should, I know, always be contained in the preface; and, in fact, a good book should have no occasion for an apology. Unfortunately, I have no learned friend, otherwise I should have begged him to write upon my book another book, and advertise the reader of the ingenuity and depth of reflection he should find in it: but have I not myself been tempted to take the place of such a friend, and make the eulogium of my book by supposing letters written to a country minister? I must mention what determined me to act differently.

My wife came into my closet, and surprised me writing, and surrounded with the leaves of my journal.

'What art thou writing with so much attention?' said she to me.

I reddened, and replied with an embarrassment that augmented her curiosity. She took up a leaf, and read it.

'Ha! ha!' cried she, 'it is the history of our life; but it is very amusing: if one would thus say every thing, there is not a day that might not have its turn, and furnish the subject of a leaf; but then one should be very particular about one's words and actions.'

She sat down near me, and took up the rest. I was ill at ease: I well remembered that there were, in the first chapter, some things relating to her that required to be read with the tone of sentiment, to make them pass. I said therefore—'let me read them to you, my dear.'

I put my arm round her, and in the difficult parts softened my voice, and pressed her hand.

When the first chapter was finished, she said, smiling—'I think perfectly like Lolotte, that thou art not so good with me upon paper as in real life. But this little girl—who could have imagined that she loved her cousin—and at her age?'

'Thou art very right, my friend; it is extremely vexatious that the heart so frequently gets the start of the head; otherwise it is good that I know it: perhaps thy *maternal* eye would not have sufficed.'

At the second chapter, entitled *the window and the signal*, her heart began to melt; she put her arm round upon my shoulders, and I saw upon her lips a smile I had not seen for several years.

'Thou shouldst have stopped there,' said she, 'with your writings.'

'And this chapter here, my Augusta,' cried I, passing to that of *the marriage*, 'dost thou not wish to hear it?'

Soon I saw her eyes moisten; at last the tears began to flow.

'Dear Charles,' cried she, with emotion, 'god has done a great deal for man in giving him a heart to love!'

The last chapter preceding this, which has for title *my wife*, affected her as long as there is mention of her father; but what respected herself alone, dried up her tears at once, although I was attentive to change some words that might hurt her. Her emotion dissipated by degrees.

'All that is very fine, my dear friend,' said she; 'I counsel thee, however, to remember thy *Acontius*.'

It was clear to me that my wife was not content with what she had just read, since she spoke to me of Acontius. When she would smile formerly at my fruitless attempts to compose a book, I used to say to her—'thou knowest not, my dear friend, how much one must meditate before beginning a work.'

I did not say that to excuse my procrastination, but because I was convinced of it. I knew by heart the letter of Acontius upon the difficulties of the art of writing, and the advice he gives to writers; and I spoke according to him.

'Dear Augusta,' said I, 'a book is the most important thing in the world: who knows of how many good or bad actions it may be the cause? and then if it were only for one's cotemporaries that one wrote, but it is likewise for posterity; it is future generations that may be corrupted, or rendered better, and who will judge your book. Listen, my love, to what Acontius says;—'A writer should always reflect that the century following will be more enlightened than the present: therefore he should write, not only for the public existing, but for the public to come.'

When, therefore, she reminded me of Acontius, I judged she did not find my work deserving of passing to posterity; and I answered—'It is precisely on account of what he says, dear Augusta, that I wish to publish these pages.'

She smiled, gave me a little tap upon the cheek, and went away without saying any thing further. It was thus she always did when she thought herself right, and yielded to me through complaisance, rather than persuasion. I laid my hand to my forehead—I reflected; then resumed Acontius, read him again with attention, and was entirely tranquil. I took up my pen, and continued without the least scruple.

'Ah!' exclaimed I, 'erudition will be acquired, and its fund augmented! the human mind may continue its progress toward perfection—taste may change; but so long as there are good and susceptible hearts, they will be moved on reading my work: I know not if the succeeding age will set a value upon science, or despise it; but I know that there will always be fathers, children, spouses; and as I write their sentiments from the feelings of my soul, I am perfectly sure of always finding readers.'

Acontius remarks that the fifteenth, century was more learned than the sixteenth, in which he lived; but that there was more reason and good sense in the latter. Rapin, in his comparison between Thucydides and Titus Livius, says the same thing of the seventeenth compared with the sixteenth; and here are his own words;—'the men of the seventeenth century are not so frightfully learned as those of the sixteenth; but, instead of this heap of useless learning, there is more good sense, more sound taste, and less pedantry, &c. &c.'

The same thing is said at present of the eighteenth century compared with the seventeenth. It is curious that each century *reproaches* that which precedes with learning, and boasts of being superior to it in taste and good sense.

Acontius ridicules the fifteenth century; Rapin the sixteenth; and some new Rapin will ridicule our's, in its turn; the more especially as, in these last ten years, it appears that human reason has advanced rapidly, and that erudition, on the contrary, has much declined.

What is most certain, is, that he was not in the wrong who said that men, notwithstanding their reason, of which they made such a great boast, were not better than the men of every other time.—But I am not yet come to the apology of my book:—so much the better—it will do without one; I leave the trouble to the reader: I shall not publish it till the end of the last year of the present century; then Acontius can have nothing to say.

CHAP. IX.

The Upstart.

MAN is naturally vain and overbearing: whether he fall or rise, he always finds means to make a merit of it in his own eyes. Has he rendered himself guilty of any wrong he cannot possibly dissemble to himself? he becomes usually the more humble, the more indulgent; and this disposition of mind is so agreeable to him, that he looks upon it as a virtue, and glories in it. Does he, on the contrary, a truly virtuous action? it is rarely that he does not become more harsh and severe, and sometimes even unjust and cruel, particularly when that action demands a sacrifice: and is virtue any other thing than a continual sacrifice?

The intendant of our village was precisely what is called an *upstart:* he had commenced by being domestic to a president of administration. A fine hand and much zeal acquired him the favor of his master. He quitted his place, and, with the produce of his earnings, took a little farm. His old master continued to countenance him, and to procure him every opportunity of augmenting his little fortune. He did not want sense, and shewed so much intelligence in the management of his affairs, that he acquired the reputation of a very clever, honest man. A legacy which fell to him, increased his property and consequence, and enabled him to add to his little farm, the very considerable one of

Eizebach. The Count of Rangart, who never came there, permitted him to inhabit the castle. Then he easily obtained the hand of a rich heiress, daughter of a state-counsellor, and came with her to reside in our village.

Before his marriage he lived quite plain, being entirely taken up with agriculture; he always dressed, however, with elegance: but the family into which he allied, being one of the most considerable of the electorate, he wished, by his luxury, to efface the stain of his origin, and by this means to dispose the relations of the young lady in his favor. They were people whose gentility lay in their strong box, and who, without being lavish, made a sort of ostentation of their riches, and thought money above every thing. Schink passed for having a great deal, and for making more every day; that was all that was necessary, and they consented to the marriage.

As soon as it was decided, the intendant fitted up his house in the greatest style, furnished a superb apartment in the castle of Eizebach; bought the finest horses, the most magnificent carriages; hired a numerous train of servants, whom he clad in a handsome livery, and an excellent cook; got a pack of hounds, huntsmen, whippers in, grooms; in fine, the retinue of a lord.

He hoped by all this pomp to cause to be forgotten, and perhaps to forget himself, that he had been a servant; but that is never forgotten; and the recollection troubled his repose. His own domestics retraced the cruel idea to his mind: he was upon thorns if any body said the least thing before him that reminded him of that part of his life; and every day added to the pageantry of his house, to make himself more like a great lord. He succeeded at least in imposing upon people of an inferior class, with whom he was affable without familiarity; and, in attracting to his house the poor gentry of the neighborhood, with whom he was humble, cringing and flattering, believing himself too well paid for his good dinners and expence, when he obtained any marks of consideration from them, or saw titles enter his house.

His wife, who possessed all the financial arrogance of her family, could not support this disposition of her husband, which she called meanness; and, not being able to effect an intimacy with the rich nobility, who looked upon her as beneath them, she revenged herself by humiliating the poor nobility, who came habitually to her table, with her luxury, her grand airs, and her impertinence.

At the commencement, this different manner of acting occasioned some altercations between the husband and wife; in one of these disputes mrs. Schink was foolish enough to reproach him with having been a domestic. From that moment, love, confidence, friendship, all was annihilated; he could never forgive her, and they began to hate each other most cordially.

We lived upon a good footing of reciprocal politeness with them, or rather with the intendant; for in spite of all I could do, both our wives always entertained the coldest indifference for each other. I asked Augusta one day the reason why she liked the husband better than the wife.

'Because he is only vain,' replied she, 'and his wife is of an insulting haughtiness; he only seeks to raise himself without lowering us; she thinks she elevates herself still more by our humiliation. He says to me —'I have ten thousand crowns worth of plate; my coachman is from London, my cook from Paris," and so on. She tells me—" my god! how I pity you, to be obliged to eat off pewter! I, who all my life have eat off the finest porcelain." When the intendant speaks to me of his riches, of his equipages, of his fine clothes, he seems so happy! such folly does no harm to any body, and amuses me; but disdain is never diverting, and that of his wife makes me sad; not from the comparison of her porcelain with my pewter, but from her intention to wound and afflict me.'

Notwithstanding our desire to remain at home, we were often drawn into the pleasures of this ostentatious castle;

they invited us continually. The intendant came also frequently to our house:—but all on a sudden, without my being able to guess for what, this intimacy ceased entirely; they invited us no more, and on every occasion mr. Schink strove to give me pain.

I have ever loved to live in peace with all my neighbors, and grew, therefore, uneasy at this change. In fine, after having considered a long time about it, I resolved to go to him, and ask him at once what he had against me. When I spoke of it to my wife, she told me she did not approve of this step, and that it was better to leave the man to his vanity and ill-humor.

I insisted on knowing the reason of this advice. The good creature could not tell a lie to her Charles; she avowed to me at last that, from his vanity and good opinion of himself, the intendant had imagined that the complaisance my wife showed in listening to him, proceeded from love, and had made a declaration with such a confidence of success as rendered it extremely offensive.

'And what hast thou answered, my sweet friend?'

'Every thing,' said she with vivacity, and reddening again with anger, 'every thing that my wounded delicacy and outraged honor could inspire of the strongest and most cutting nature.'

'But still what hast thou said to him?'

'That he was the vilest of men—that I held him in horror—that he need not think my profound contempt for him sprung from his having worn a livery; but that, were he a prince, a king, instead of a footman, he should be treated in the same manner.'

I was no longer astonished at the wrath of our overbearing neighbor. I knew that this unhappy livery was his sore place, and I saw that he would be our enemy for life, which I told Augusta.

'I could wish, my love,' said I, 'that you had said any thing else to him; it was a reproach that had nothing in common with the offence. What good was there in speaking to him of his livery? he will never forgive us.'

'But could I,' cried she, weeping, 'can I forgive him the horrible opinion he had of me? could I treat him too severely?'

'Ah! I repeat to you again, dear Augusta, I wish you had told him any thing else: we shall pay for that livery very dear—we shall remember it a long time; but,' added I, embracing her, 'I will remember longer still, my Augusta, how deeply you must have been wounded, to be harsh to such a point!'

She gave me a look such as I had not seen before, sighed profoundly, and left me. From that time I often remarked a cloud of dejection upon her charming countenance, and the traces of tears, which she strove to hide from me; and shortly did I penetrate the cause. Her tender and generous soul conceived that I had not resented as I should, the injury the intendant offered us. She had rejected his vows with horror, that was quite simple —she loved me; but in order not to afflict me, she had denied herself the greatest pleasure an honest woman can enjoy—that of displaying her virtue and fidelity; and the pleasure, perhaps greater still, of proving to her husband that she could please if she had a mind. My Augusta had resisted all—even the pain of concealing any thing from me, which, to her, was perhaps still more difficult; and when at last she was forced to tell it me, far from being irritated like her, it seemed as if I blamed her! ah! it was I—it was I alone who was to blame with this angel! I felt it, and resolved to repair my fault.

I went to her, caressed her in the tenderest manner, swore to her, as I felt, that I loved her still more than I was loved by her, and that I was the happiest of men—too happy, too sure of her, to be irritated against a repulsed rival.

She resumed her serene look, and told me that she was

sorry for having been so violent when a firm dignity would have sufficed. 'But,' observed she, 'is it not the greatest offence that can be offered a woman, to testify a bad opinion of her? and is it not testifying it, to make her a declaration that supposes at least the hope of succeeding?'

'And the greatest offence,' continued I, 'that can be offered to a man who has a grand livery, is to remind him that he wore it himself.'

I then acknowledged to my Augusta all that had passed in my mind on the subject.

It will be perceived that in all this affair I too had been toutched in the tenderest part, and that my knowledge of mankind was much astray. First, I had not guessed either what attracted the intendant to my house, or what had removed him; then, according to the most acute observations, and subtle theory of the human heart, I had arranged how I should conduct myself with him to regain his friendship, when I was ignorant of what had made me lose it. I knew by heart the discourse I was to hold to him, to discover what motive of repugnance actuated him, and I thought myself sure of penetrating it. Perfectly content with myself and my project, I come to communicate it to my wife, and, with a single word, she overturns my whole plan. I felt not only that my proud neighbor was provoked beyond recall, but also that I could attempt nothing to bring him back.

I confess I had been more humiliated at the check received by my profound philosophy, than sensible to the offence, or touched with my wife's fidelity; but the cruel impression made on her by my indifference, showed me the wrong I was guilty of, in a glaring light: and yet, after having repaired it, I committed that of making a merit of my repentance, and esteeming it as a virtue. My good and generous Augusta took it for what I pleased. I see at present that she was too harsh with the intendant, merely because she was in the right; and I too indulgent with myself, because I was in the wrong.

Our neighbor remained, therefore, an irreconcileable enemy; my wife was very glad of it, and would not allow that it was owing to the livery at all. For my part, the idea of being so near a person who hated me, was insupportable: I could not behold the castle without feeling the most painful sensation, and I saw it every time I opened my window. The same sentiment redoubled whenever the intendant passed before the house, and he went by every day; but it was at its crisis when I was obliged to preach before him on the love of our enemies, or forgiveness of injuries. At the city, I would have removed from the quarter where my enemy resided; in the village that was impossible.

In fine, this hatred weighed so heavily upon me, that I made several attempts to bring back the revengeful intendant to a certain point; but, far from succeeding, my endeavors appeared fresh insults, because I only half did what should be done completely; and because, in the bottom of my soul, I, a minister of peace, and loving peace above all things, did not pardon him, any more than he did my wife.

Oh! why do the finest resolutions produce virtuous actions so rarely? it is because there lurks in the recesses of our soul a hidden leaven that spoils the effect; it is because the passions always conceal something, as the clerks of the treasury always retain a part of the money of the state. Fear, pride, indolence, selfishness, hatred, come in turn to sully with their venom the virtuous action which emanated from the heart so beautiful and so pure.

I concluded by accustoming myself to mr. Schink's disagreeable conduct, and our private happiness was not troubled by it.

CHAP. X.

The Coquette.

I HAVE not thought it just to assort with the pure and artless character of my Augusta, that of the woman I am about to describe; but this portrait will do well enough after that I have given in the last chapter. Now is the moment to speak of the wanderings of my youth, and to beg the reader to return with me to the university, and recall to his mind *that circumstance of my life which occupied me a whole year*, and of which I have promised the recital.

Julia Goldman was daughter to a tolerably rich man, who gave himself up to alchymy, and passed his life puffing in a retired closet, without troubling himself about his children. She had lost her mother from her birth. Two elder brothers were grown up lads, and the only guardians of their young sister.

As they were under no restraint, and had money, they indulged in all the pleasures of their age, and their house became the theatre of gaiety:—it was frequented by all the young people of the city; balls, plays, dramatic entertainments, suppers followed in a perpetual round. Julia was brought up in the midst of this dissipation, without mother, without any guide, but with a very decided character, and a most charming person. Each young libertine of her brother's acquaintance looked upon her

as an easy prey. From her infancy she was surrounded by flatterers who spoke the language of love before she could comprehend it.

For her good, or rather for her misfortune, her sensibility was stifled before it discovered itself. She became accustomed to receive the homage of the men as a legitimate tribute due to her charms, and amused herself with inspiring a violent passion, without letting herself be in the least affected by it: she became therefore a coquette of the most dangerous species. Her heart grew completely hardened; not having yet partaken of the passion she strove to inspire, she had early learned to play with the danger, and remain always mistress of herself.

At fifteen, Julia, beautiful as an angel, reigned sovereign over all the young men who composed her brother's society, as well as over her own heart, which she governed at will. The more she tortured that of her lovers, the better was she pleased; their torment was her delight and glory.

This thirst of conquests increased with years; she became insatiable, and varied the snares she laid with such art, that there was no resisting them. By turns gentle, imperious, sensible, compassionate, romantic, artless, heroic, virtuous, tender, elevated, enthusiastic, philosophical, reasonable, serious, gay to a folly, volatile to giddiness, she knew how to assume every tone, every shade of character, and played all these different parts with equal ease. Her reputation was lost, it is true, except, what is rare enough, for the young wildings who fluttered around her, without being able to obtain any thing.

Soon it was not merely to these young men that she confined her attacks; they were levelled at all she met, from childhood to old age: her coquetry even went so far as to give herself the same pains to please the women. To be universally admired was her sole aim.

Notwithstanding the ill opinion conceived of her, several men were sufficiently bewitched to wish to marry her:

she refused them all, and yet had the art to retain them as adorers. She lost not one of her slaves, but every day, on the contrary, added to her list all the strangers that came to the university.

She did not wish to marry until she could find, in point of rank and fortune, all that could satisfy her desires, and indemnify her for the loss of her liberty. Her friends thought she had fixed her views upon a young count of Klénau, who, like all the rest, was chained to her car, but was still dependant on an old father that would never have consented to the match. She did not show him any particular attentions, only humored him a little more than she did her other adorers.

In giving my lessons, I often heard Julia Goldman mentioned as a divinity. I laughed at the enthusiasm of the young fools, and thought of her like all the world. One of my scholars told me one day that he was commissioned to bring me to her house. I consented through curiosity.

'Well!' said I to myself, 'what is it I shall see so miraculous? a very white, delicate skin—large blue eyes—an elegant figure—the bloom of youth. I have nothing to do but to represent her to myself such as she shall be in thirty years, and in each dimple behold a wrinkle beforehand.'

I went, fully determined to brave the danger, and escape it.

When I entered her drawing-room, she was surrounded by a circle of men. As soon as she perceived me, she came forward, saluted me with a peculiar grace, and addressed some words to me in a mild, endearing manner. She led me into the circle, and presented me as a person she distinguished. However occupied she was with all the other men, my eyes always met hers. The instant I opened my lips, she interrupted the general conversation, repeated what I had said, asked my opinion, listened to it with the docility of a child, and approved with a gracious and tender smile. When I took leave, a light cloud of sadness overcast her features, and she exclaimed softly—'what! so soon?' and when I got into the street,

I perceived she had approached the window, and staid to look after me.

I returned home extremely satisfied with myself. I had never been in a company where I was so much at ease; naturally timid, the suffrage of the fair Julia had encouraged me. I took this success for an effect of that ease which had, in my opinion, rendered me extremely amiable. I was very much flattered, above all, that Julia had followed me to the window: at that moment I was not in reality a whit better, or less coxcomical than the others who surrounded her.

After some days I went again to see her, and this time she received me with pleasure and particular distinction; but what I alone could remark, was an ingenuous confidence, and at the same time a virginal modesty. Under a light pretext, she called me over to the window, and remained standing to chat with me. She spoke to me of my studies, of my native place. What she said was nothing remarkable; but her physiognomy, which I alone saw, had such a marked expression of sympathy! a sweet smile—looks sometimes tender, sometimes animated—a gentle blush—an amiable embarrassment, succeeded each other upon her countenance.

The graces of her slender form, which developed themselves in an elegant *contour* at every motion—her arm, so round and white, leaning on the window frame—the pressure of that pretty hand, which she laid upon mine whenever she interrupted me—the sweet and tranquil smile that accompanied her attention while she listened to me, and which became so expressive when any striking reflection happened to escape me that seemed to accord with her ideas—the frown and look of impatience with which she turned toward the company when any body spoke too loud—all these proofs that my conversation was agreeable to Julia, gave me an emotion, an uneasiness impossible to express.

I had passed but few moments in my life more delightful to my self-love; I had lost the bashfulness that rendered me so awkward every where else, and I felt

that it was Julia who inspired me with so much assurance and ease. I spoke to her with enthusiasm of friendship, which I was hardly acquainted with, and of the country, where I had only passed my infancy. Her eyes obscured —she raised them gently toward heaven.

'Oh the country!' said she, with an affecting tone— 'happy, truly happy are they who can live in it!'

I continued to speak to her of it with exstacy, and her emotion appeared to augment; I saw her pretty white hand press her rosy cheek, and her taper finger steal away a starting tear, as if to conceal it from me. I saw it but too well, and would have given my life to dry it with my lips.

I know not how she managed, but she contrived to make all the company retire in a few minutes, and I found myself alone with her.

'God be praised!' cried she, sighing; such a noise! my head could not bear it.'

I wanted to retire also, seeing her put her hand to her forehead with a suffering look; but she told me that an amiable, soft conversation would do her good, and I remained. We resumed our favorite subject, the country, solitude, the beauties of nature, the charms of friendship. She spoke of all with warmth, but at the same time with an innocence, a simplicity, so affecting.

'It is the life I have always desired to lead,' said she to me, 'and with somebody of a corresponding taste, ——'

She stopped in a sweet confusion.

I listened to her as an angel who came to promise me salvation. I took her hand—I kissed it twice with passion. She drew it back, blushing, and gently pressing mine, then complained that her head-ach grew more violent. I told her that by pressing the head strongly relief was sometimes procured. She tried, and laughed at

her want of strength. I offered to do it for her: she consented and leaned forward her pretty head. I put both my hands to her temples; and my heart, agitated by a thousand new and delicious sensations, was bound much tighter than the charming forehead I was pressing with so much ardor.

My emotion was such, that I blessed heaven; when Julia, drawing back, and disengaging my hands, told me, with a smile—'that is not of the least use—I suffer still.'

I advised her to apply a wet cloth to her forehead.

'Do you believe it will do me good? said she, with the tone of tender gratitude: 'I should like to owe my cure to you.'

She took a white handkerchief, dipped it in cold water, and begged me to tie it upon her forehead, disposing it so that it covered her eyes entirely, in the manner painters represent love and innocence. It was then that the danger was at its height: she could not see me, and I could at my ease, devour with my fervid eyes, that mouth so exquisitely lovely—her cheeks glowing like the damask rose—her neck, her bosom so transparently white—and all so animated! and, then that form so voluptuous! and that pretty foot especially, bound in a shoe of embroidered satin, of which the tip scarcely appeared under her long muslin robe. She was tranquil like a suffering saint; and so patient, with such an angelic sweetness, without uttering a single plaint, smiling at pain!

After having bound the handkerchief, I had remained in the same attitude, as close to her as was possible: I felt the gentle warmth of her breath. She might have counted the rapid beats of my heart. Insensibly I approached closer still; and I know not what I might in my frenzy have dared, when suddenly she tore of the band, and throwing back her head, laughing, told me she felt herself in reality better. She did not appear to take any notice of my disorder, and the little distance there was between

us. As soon as her eyes were uncovered, I became bashful again. Somebody came in and I withdrew.

I returned home the most amorous of mortals; I thought so at least, and then it was I who was blindfold. All night long I had before my eyes the image of this beautiful angel, with her eyes covered, and her celestial smile. I fancied I loved her passionately, and I dared to flatter myself with a return.

Every day I returned to my Julia, and every day confirmed the illusion. The most evident emotion when she saw me enter—her downcast looks when I spoke to her, and which followed my steps so wistfully when I went away—some words that appeared to escape her; sentences interrupted with visible confusion; in fine, Julia exerted all her skill, and I became the victim of an insensible, selfish heart, that gloried in its triumph, and enjoyed seeing me ensnared in its nets.

I would have given any thing in the world to converse with her alone for a minute. Excepting by some words and allusions, which she might easily have understood, I had not found any opportunity of declaring my passion, and I was certain that my sincerity, my tears, my transports would obtain an avowal on her part: but since her behavior to me had given me room to hope, is was no longer possible to get a sight of her without witnesses. She was always surrounded. If I was obstinate in remaining last, she would find some excuse to go out, and returned with a child, a domestic or her brothers—and the opportunity was lost.

I knew that Julia had the reputation of being a downright coquette. I might readily have convinced myself of it, by remarking her conduct towards my rivals: not one of them had the air of being jealous of me, or less happy. I mentioned it to her one day while chatting in a low voice in a corner of the saloon.

'Julia,' cried I, 'ah! how culpable would you be, if

your conduct were only the artful manœuvring of coquetry !'

I observed her : she was embarrassed—she was very much so, and stammered I know not what.

'I have then guessed it, Julia ? you wish to be adored, and are incapable of loving !'

'I acknowledge,' said she, casting down her eyes, 'that it might be thought so, and I understand that I have got such a name ; but what would you have me do ? can I say to one—'you are insipid enough to give me the vapors ?'—to another—'You are disgustingly pedantic ?'—to a third—'you are an empty pate ?'—to a fourth—'your heart is worn out ?'—to all—'you displease me excessively ?' Should I drive away the acquaintances of my brothers, and deprive them of the society that assembles in our house, because it pleases those gentlemen to address to me their homage ? am I to give them the power of deranging my plan of life ? no, my dear Bemrode ; those insignificant butterflies merit no further than to let them play round the flower they prefer, while we amuse ourselves with their fluttering, and the whimsical variety of their colors. But, believe me,' cried she, with a look that was tenderness itself, and softly pressing my hand, 'believe me, I know how to make a choice, and appreciate what is conformable to my heart.'

These words appeared to me an avowal. I could have wished to throw myself at her feet ; I could hardly contain my transports. I went away fully satisfied of her sentiments, and strutting with pride, repeated in an extacy—*'I know how to make a choice ; I can appreciate what is conformable to my heart ;* and it is I who am the happy being *chosen, appreciated* by the mose beauteous of women !'

I became more confident, more assiduous. She continued to act with art sufficient to feed my vanity, and preserve my affection : and thus passed away a whole year of illusion and of happiness.

Seeing, however, that nothing either realized or destroyed my hopes, I sought in my knowledge of the human heart, a solution to this problem, and what was necessary still to be done to decide Julia altogether in my favor.

'It is clear she loves me,' thought I, 'every circumstance affords a proof of it; but she fears to lose her sway, and, to elude the imperious sentiment that domineers her, she feigns a coquetry that exists not in her heart. It must be penetrated by force—that heart which only languishes for me;'—and jealousy seemed the most likely means.

I began to make my visits more short and more seldom. I seized the first occasion to speak with admiration before Julia of one of the handsomest girls in the city. I looked absent, occupied; when she spoke to me, I scarcely replied. I affected not to regard her.

In effect, I attained the end I had proposed. Julia dissimulated neither her tenderness nor her inquietude any longer. I could often observe, in my turn, that her eyes were filled with tears, and that she no more listened to the flatteries of my rivals, but with a distraction that seemed as unaffected as mine was otherwise. She no longer showed to any but me those delicate attentions which are the touchstone of real love. When she spoke to me, her voice was more moving, her look more tender; she had the air of wishing to remove to a distance all who were near her. In fine, she employed every feminine allure to bring me back, which was not very hard, since my distance was but a feint. Thus the dexterous spider, when she has taken in her nets an unhappy fly, observes it with care; and if it make a single effort to escape, darts upon it, and encircles it anew with a thousand threads twisted so artfully that it strives in vain to extricate itself.

Elated at the success of my experiment, I returned to Julia, more submissive, more passionate than ever, and entreated a single half hour of private conversation.

'Ingrate!' said she, 'do you not see that I attempt it

without ceasing? but can I? am I not the slave both of society and of my independence? it is only by the most unremitting prudence I can save my reputation in the vortex where I live. Ah!' continued she, casting down her eyes, 'I well know we should have a great deal to say to one another if there were any means of eluding suspicion.'

I wanted nothing more. I kissed her hand with rapture, and said not another word to her that evening. I went out before three or four young men who had their hats and canes already in their hands; but I knew the way to the chamber of Julia, and I slipped there furtively. It was the way to *elude suspicion*; and did she not ask me?

But I protest my sole aim, my only intention, was to speak to her of my sentiments, to obtain an acknowledgment of her's, to settle our future union; and I did not harbor even a thought dangerous to her virtue. In the far end of the chamber was an alcove, closed with a curtain. I had not the smallest notion of drawing it; my heart was pure, but delightfully affected: it flew to meet her. At length I heard the door of the drawing-room shut, the young fops take their leave, and Julia approach. My agitation redoubled. She was speaking to her eldest brother. But what was my position when, instead of wishing him good night, she said—'come with me into my chamber; I will explain all that to you!'—I knew not which way to turn, and had barely the time to pop into the alcove, where there was scarcely room for the bed.

The reader may laugh if he will; it is my confession I am making him. I felt a sentiment of veneration on penetrating into this asylum.

'Hail,' exclaimed I in thought, prostrating myself before the bed, 'hail, sanctuary of the innocent repose of my lovely friend! god, protector of virtue be thou a thousand times blessed, and protect our love!'

During this mute invocation, the brother and sister

entered, and the conversation continued. I could not avoid hearing it. It was her brother who was speaking.

'I repeat it, Julia,' said he with earnestness, 'you go too far. Let me give you a little advice: you make game of all these people too openly.'

Julia burst out into a laugh, and said with a vulgar tone I had never remarked in her—'faith, it is their fault! why are you all such silly elves, of whom any thing can be made by flattering your vanity? but do not be angry, brother—my views go further than you think:—only let the old count of Klénau die, and I marry his great dolt of a son the next morning.'

'But if he survive some years longer?'

'Oh! he will not live! and then in that case I will fall back upon Preizon. As to him, I can have him when I please.'

'Yes, if he do not finish by opening his eyes, and if all your admirers do not perceive in the end how much you jilt them. Reflect, Julia, you are now twenty-two; it is time to think seriously of an establishment, instead of making dupes. That young Clergyman, for instance, Bemrode, with whom you render yourself so conspicuous—what do you mean to do with him, prithee?'

'Ah!' thought I at that moment with extreme emotion, 'poor Julia! how that question must embarras you!'

I listened with more attention, expecting either a timid avowal, or a trembling evasive answer.

'Who!' replied Julia, in a firm tone, and laughing out with all her force, 'who! that great idiot, Bemrode? it is he of all the rest that amuses me most: he has such an opinion of himself! it is so pleasant to take him in! I knew, before I had seen him, that he had great pretensions to a knowledge of human nature, and

possessed the exalted principles of a heart perfectly intact, and the bashfulness of one who has seen the world only in his books. "Let us see," said I, "if we cannot get round all that:" and I had him introduced to me. Truly I had at first trouble enough; not to inspire him with love—that was done the very first day by flattering his vanity, which is my principal means; but to make him acknowledge to himself that he was, and to embolden him to pay his addresses. I talked to him of the country—of the woods, meadows, brooks—of the sky, the stars, the moon; I wept—I squeezed his hand. He grew more ardent every day, but so awkwardly! in fine, one day I send away all the others—I tell him I have the headach, and beg him to press my forehead with his hand. The poor fellow pressed it in such good earnest, that he gave me the headach I only pretended to have; then I put a wet handkerchief on in form of a fillet, which hid my eyes. When he no longer saw these terrible eyes he became less timid, and came quite close—quite close; but suddenly I tear off the fillet. I could have wished, brother, that you had seen his curious look, so inflamed! so confounded! and the profoundly respectful air with which he drew back! since then he believes me passionately fond of him; and nothing amuses me more than to keep him in his error, without its costing me any other trouble than to repeat my pastoral character from time to time, to look at him tenderly, to sigh when I have a mind for a laugh; and thus lead at will this skilful judge of hearts, who knows, however, that I jilt them all, for he has told me so; and I avow that I was not a little disconcerted; but I recovered presently, on thinking that he was not aware of being himself the most stupid and egregious dupe of all.

'Do let me, brother, amuse myself a little longer with this original. If for some days past I have been a little more tender than usual with him, it is not that he interests me the least in the world, but because I thought he was going to escape me. At present he is more submissive, amorous, and confident than ever. He torments me for a private interview; it is solely to make me a declaration

of his respectful flame; and I will grant it, to divert myself. It is not at all dangerous for me, I assure you. He knows men so well, he must also learn to know the women!'

The reader may conceive all I felt during this conversation: shame, spite, rage, contempt, and, above all, the horrible inquietude of not knowing how I could get out of my retreat.

The brother and sister chatted some time longer in the same tone: at last they separated. Julia remained alone; and my anguish became excessive at seeing the moment approach when I should be discovered.

She went to her looking-glass, took off her head-dress, and let fall her beautiful tresses. How much more ravishing did she then become! but the more she was embellished by her personal charms, the more did the falsehood of her soul fill me with horror. I fancied I saw Lucifer in the guise of an angel; and my only desire was, to be far remote from the accured spot.

She took her light, and came singing to the side of the alcove, probably to find her night-cap. It was the moment of crisis. I gathered my courage as well as I could. She drew the curtain, and stepping backward, uttered a cry—'Bemrode, is it you! great god! what can you be doing there?'

'I am learning to know women; and the lesson is over,' said I, making a low bow, and going to the chamber-door.

She was so thunderstruck, that she let me go out without saying a single word; but she followed me in silence, with the light in her hand, to the foot of the staircase, when I turned round, and again saluted her profoundly.

'Good night, my dear Bemrode!' cried she then, with her gracious smile; farewell till to-morrow!'

I opened the door of the house without answering. She closed it after me, bolted it, and I saw no more the *beautiful Julia*.

I cannot tell how I got home. When I found myself in my chamber, I stamped with fury; I believe I despised myself still more than this false and perfidious woman. It was her trade; but I, what an unbecoming part had I acted for a whole year!—my self-love wounded in its

most sensible part—my heart, simple and sincere, serving for sport to the most unworthy coquetry! a whole year could assuredly have been better employed. In short, all together concurred to exasperate me to the last degree. I, who am naturally mild and patient, would at that instant have picked a qarrel with my best friend—I no longer knew myself.

I passed the half of the night in forming a thousand projects of vengeance and departure. It did not appear to me possible to exist any longer in the city Julia inhabited, where I had been so cruelly humiliated.

Toward morning, overcome with lassitude, I sunk to rest. When I awoke, I was considerably refreshed and calmed, and more disposed to laugh at my adventure, than to revenge it. Oh no, my Augusta, no! it was not love I felt for Julia!—I slept, and I loved her no more.

What beautiful and just images had the ancients! at Sicyone there was seen in a temple a statue of sleep appeasing a lion by lulling him in his arms; and this god was called the *giver of good*. Ah! certainly he merited this appellation, since he reposes the soul, mollifies anger, suspends vengeance, much better and much sooner than the cold commentaries of our moralists! how many misfortunes and crimes has this *giver of good* prevented! how often has he quieted the lion roaring in my bosom, when all my reasonings, all my systems of philosophy had failed!

Whatever love, whatever respect I have for the holy bible, which says—'*do not lie down upon thy wrath*,' I have often said to my son—'go, my son, lie down and sleep upon thy anger.' What would become of poor human kind, in spite of all the systems of morality, if the *giver of good*, gentle sleep, came not to close the eyelids of the unhappy and of the wicked, and calm the tempests that torment us? why then should I not say—'go to sleep, my son?'—it is only a family receipt; but it has been tried.

I remained, however, several days without stirring out, in order to settle myself to my studies. When I appeared in the world, I found every thing as before. During a month I avoided the street where Julia lived, and at the end of two I had entirely forgot both my folly and its object.—Oh no, no! I did not love Julia!

CHAP. XI.

The visit.

I HAD been sixteen years minister at Eizebach, when one summer evening, walking about in my chamber, expecting with impatience my family, who were gathering fruit in the garden, I heard a rap at my door. Imagining it was some peasant who wanted to speak with me, I cried out—'come in!' and beheld a woman appear, wrapped up in a long black cloak, with a sort of cap of dirty coarse linen, and a very vulgar look. It was already so dark, that I could not distinguish her features.

'What do you want?' said I.

'Oh my dear mr. Parson!' said she, with an accent half flemish, half saxon. 'I have come a great way! I was settled at Hanau; my husband died there, after his affairs having been ruined. He has left me a son, and a great deal of misery, mr. Parson. I am going to my brother at Halberstadt, and I have nothing to carry me.'

I understood that she was a beggar, and I put my hand to my pocket.

'From Hanau to Halberstadt?' observed I. 'But you are not in the right road.'

'It may be so. I go on foot, and I do not know the road too well. I stopped at the sign of the pitcher, on going into the village, where I learnnd you were the pastor; and I thought of coming to see you, my dear mr. Bemrode. Do you not remember me?

'No,' replied I, 'not in the least. Have I ever seen you? what is your name?'

'My maiden name is Goldman.'

This name reminded me of nothing. We used never to call Julia any thing but the *beautiful Julia.* Her family name was almost effaced from my memory.

'Goldman!' repeated I; endeavoring to collect some scattered ideas.'

'Yes, Julia Goldman: you have not forgot Julia?'

I was extremely surprised; but heaven knows how it happened that I totally forgot the number of years that had elapsed since our seperation! the instant she named herself, the image of the beautiful Julia advancing to the alcove where I was concealed, the light in her hand, her hair flowing loose, brilliant with youth and vivacity, presented itself to my mind; and under that long black cloak, under that hair cut even to her forehead, under that large clumsy cap, I expected to find the features and enchanting figure of the lovely Julia.

'Gracious god! Julia Goldman!' exclaimed I, with a sentiment of pleasure, and rejoiced to think that I was going to see that charming face once more, which I fancied I could already distinguish in the obscurity.

At that moment our old Mary entered with a light, and the rays fell upon Julia. I could hardly retain a cry; but

I started back with affright! not a feature, not a single feature that reminded me of what she had been! that skin so white and blooming, at present yellow and withered, was stretched upon projecting bones—two hollow, spiritless eyes wandering about with an unmeaning look—that fine aquiline nose we so much admired, seemed lengthened, and gave her physiognomy an air of harshness and effrontery—the pearls of her mouth had disappeared, or were any thing else but pearls—her shape was strong and coarse, as well as her naked hand; but what struck me most of all, was a big man's shoe, quite covered with dirt which I saw under her short round petticoat! I had still before my eyes the pretty little shoe of embroidered satin.

Such a sight was calculated to extinguish all hatred in my heart, if any remained. I felt now only sadness and compassion.

'Julia Goldman!' repeated I, with the accent of the most heartfelt pity.

'Eh! but yes, Julia Goldman!' resumed she, affecting a careless tone, but slipping, however, into the darkest part of the chamber; 'you did not expect to see her again, my dear Bemrode, and so different from former times! I have suffered a great deal,' continued she, changing to a plaintive tone. 'My husband had a place at Hanau, where, after some time, he was broke and ruined, and soon died of grief. Not having the means of subsistance, I took the resolution of going to my brother; but in the meantime I am in absolute want of every thing.' —And her equipage attested her misery.

I kept silence. Without doubt, it was cruel of me to say nothing; but it was impossible for me to speak: my heart was oppressed, my tongue tied—I dared not even look at her. Absorbed in recollection, in a thousand confused and painful sentiments, I answered not a word.

'Will you not do something for your old friend, my dear Bemrode?' said she; resuming her bold, silly tone.

I was at that moment, in idea, behind the curtain of

the alcove. I repulsed with effort the impression which the word *friend* made upon me, and the tone with which it was pronounced; but told her to repose herself a few days with us—that my wife would soon come in.

'No, no, no!' exclaimed she, 'no! that is impossible!'

Her refusal, expressed in this manner, touched me anew.

'And why not?' said I to her.

'No, no, I cannot shew myself clad in this manner! give me some relief—it is all I ask of you.'

I gave her——all the money I had at that moment. She took it with avidity, and made haste to go away, because she heard somebody coming up stairs. It was my wife, who knew my history with the fair Julia in its minutest particulars. I told her that it was Julia herself she had just met; and with all the sensibility of my heart, expressed how much I was moved at her situation. In that moment I was so disposed to the tenderest pity, that I would have given all I possessed in the world to any unfortunate being who should come. It seemed to me that my wife should feel the same sentiment; I was therefore much surprised when she replied with a tone of great indifference—'it is the punishment of her wickedness and vile coquetry—she has only what she deserves, and does not interest me in the least.'

I was confounded, and did not know my Augusta—calm, it is true, little susceptible of enthusiasm, but good and compassionate. I felt something like a sentiment of indignation.

I was wrong—I forgot that she was a woman, and my wife. She knew nothing of Julia but her perfidies, and the love with which she had inspired me; she had neither seen her in her splendor nor in her misery: it was very natural for her to judge with more coolness than me; perhaps also the excess of my emotion—Angusta was cer-

tainly one of the best of women ; but, in fine, she was a woman.

For my part, I could perceive nothing in what she said but ill nature; and at the moment I was blaming her, I became myself ill natured to her.

'Augusta,' said I to her, 'your heart is as hard as a flint!'

She looked at me with astonishment, and went out, telling me supper was ready.

I went down, after some time I took to tranquilize myself; but I was still irritated against my wife. I found her at her presses, which were open, busy in making up a bundle of linen and other things.

'I think,' said she to me, seeing me come in, 'that it is clothes this poor woman is in the greatest want of: we are going to send her this.'

I went over, and pressed the hand of my Augusta, looking at what she was giving to Julia. It was very good, very substantial, but plain and coarse. I had still the *beautiful Julia* so fresh in my mind, that I could have wished for something more showy and elegant; but I did not dare to say so, the less because my wife was always dressed very plain herself: however, there was one article which I really took to heart. Nothing had more struck me in the actual figure and state of Julia, than the big man's shoe; it was perpetually before my eyes, beside the neat little shoe of embroidered satin.

'Dear Augusta,' said I, 'I beseech you put a pair of your prettiest shoes in that bundle. If you but knew what she had, and what she has! it is impossible for her to walk without hurting herself severely.'

My children stared with curiosity.

'Good god! what a change of situation!' said I to them, after having given them, in abridgment, the histo-

ry of this unfortunate woman. 'I who have seen her so beautiful! so brilliant! always surrounded with adorers, like a queen in the middle of her court, and at present obliged to wander through Germany with heavy man's shoes!'

I said that with a voice so melting, that my wife herself was moved: I saw tears in her eyes. She opened the bundle, and put in two good shifts, and all the money she had about her, in a paper. But with whatever eloquence I made the comparison of the little satin shoe of formerly, and the clumsy leather shoe of the moment, I could not persuade her to add to the bundle a pair of stuff shoes. She assured me that it was much easier to walk in men's.

The servant carried the bundle to the inn. Julia received it without saying any thing, without so much as thanking us; and next morning I received a billet from her that confounded me. It was scrawled upon dirty paper. Instead of testifying gratitude for our present she demanded more; and concluded, by threatening to acquaint my wife with the nature of my connection with her!

From that instant my pity vanished—anger and contempt succeeded; I no longer saw in her any thing but an impudent, despicable beggar, and I sent word for her to quit the village immediately. She set off, and I was some time without hearing more of her.

About a month after her visit, I was surprised to see her at church, pretty well dressed, and in the castle pew. I learned that she was placed as governess at the intendant's. I was rejoiced at knowing her to be in a decent asylum; and I will recount her history in a few words.

After having jilted so many men, she met one more artful than herself, who acquired the same dominion over her she had so long exercised upon others. He was a libertine, without morals or principles. He flattered her vanity, he excited her senses, and troubled even her heart for the first time. He succeeded in entangling her in her

own snares, seduced her, and published his triumph in such a manner as to leave no doubt of it. From that moment Julia lost the magic that made her reign over all her votaries like a goddess. The most respectful began to take liberties; those who had thought of marriage, retired, and her train diminished every day. Accustomed to the society of men, which she could not easily relinquish, she thought to retain them by her complaisances; and thus sunk by degrees to the lowest state of degradation. It was then necessary to renounce the hope of a brilliant establishment; but she did not despair of still finding a husband. In vain did she exhaust all the resources of her art, all her former means of pleasing; the enchantment was broke. Vexation, spite, her manner of living, destroyed her bloom, her charms, and her hope; youth, attractions, happiness, the ambitious projects of this girl went off in smoke, as well as the fortune of her father, which was calcined in his crucibles. At his death Julia found herself poor, blasted, despised. She disappeared, and was absent several years without any body knowing what was become of her. She made her appearance again in the most deplorable state, calling herself the wife of an intendant, and leading with her a pretty boy of twelve years old, but a wicked little rogue, who would burst out into laughter whenever any person spoke to him about his father, the intendant; and the truth of this story has never been known. She did not go to see her brother, but contrived to get herself placed in the house of Schink, where we will leave her in peace.

'She does not deserve our pity,' said I to my wife, shewing her the billet.

'No,' observed she, 'but really our assistance; and had I read this billet yesterday, I should not have sent her less. What was that, my dear friend, that our Charles was reading yesterday morning, and that you made him repeat three times over? It was a heathen author; but what he said was so just, that it might be put in the bible.'

'The same thing is also in the bible, dear Augusta;

but what our son was reading yesterday, were the topics of Aristotle—'It is better to suffer injustice, than to be unjust.'

'Might not one say likewise, my friend, it is better to be unfortunate, than not to relieve those who are?'

'Yes, surely, Augusta; and, heaven be praised! we dare to say it without a blush!'

'We dare to say it to-day,' observed she, smiling; 'for yesterday I put in the bundle all I possessed, excepting our curious pieces.'

They were about a dozen gold medals, or very old ducats, which were left me by my father-in-law, and were kept in reserve for an urgent moment.

'Good, excellent women!' cried I, 'thou shalt see we shall not be the worse for it to-day or to-morrow—unless, however, some visit be paid us; for I too have given all I had, except our little treasure.'

'The money I sent Julia,' said my wife, 'was intended to purchase a hat for our Elizabeth, if no better occasion offered to employ it.'

'A hat!—Oh, it was much better, even notwithstanding the billet! our good Eliza would think so too, I am very sure. And the billet itself—does it not prove how much this woman is to be pitied.!'

Augusta pressed my hand; and we went to join our six children. Charles, my eldest, was reading in Plutarch, where somebody asked Diogenes how we should revenge ourselves on our enemies.

'By becoming more virtuous,' replied he, 'in doing them good.'

'Read that again,' said I to him.

He read it; and I regarded my wife with satisfaction.

Philosophers may say what they please; when one has

a house furnished from top to bottom—when one has a sofa, easy chairs, a pier glass, poverty is much harder to bear, than in a hut where every thing is of a piece with it. When I have not a halfpenny in my pocket, nor in my desk, I always experience an extreme degree of shame on conducting any person into our little drawing room, which my wife has arranged very elegantly since the death of her father.

To be poor without our pride suffering by it, we should have the livery of wretchedness—a coat in tatters, and every thing that announces it, without being obliged to tell it; or else—or else, as we had then, the conscious recollection of a good action.

I could at that moment have received a stranger without blushing before my buffet, which contained, perhaps, about fifty crowns worth of plate, and acknowledged I had not a penny.

CHAP. XII.

The Beggar.

It was about an hour after I had this conversation with my wife, which, in order not to forget it, I wrote down with the reflections she had suggested to me upon poverty, that I saw a man come into the yard, dressed in a very good riding-coat. I was in the parlor with all my family, and was just on the point of going out to ask what he wanted, when he entered the room. From the first words he pronounced, I perceived he was a beggar. It hurt me extremely to tell him I had nothing to give; but

a glance of my wife restored my courage, the more as this man had in appearance the air of being richer than I:—his coat was very good, better than mine. He came forward, and, after casting a look upon all my family, presented me his request, and asked for a little money. I looked at his clothes, and it rendered me hard as marble.

'Sir,' said I to him, 'it seems to me that, with such a coat upon my back, I should be ashamed of asking a charity from a person you cannot think rich. It is impossible for me, I assure you, to offer you any thing—and I will give you nothing at all.'

'My coat!' replied he, in a very mild tone, and without seeming in the least offended; 'it is precisely this coat that should draw your attention. It is hard, very hard, with such a coat, to say I am a beggar.'

I had said and written exactly the same thing only an hour ago, and I had forgot it already. Ah! my grandchild Lolotte was much in the right!—we are better upon paper than in reality. The saying of this man fell upon my heart, and softened it, as a warm rain melts the ice of winter. I saw the looks of my wife also affected in the same manner.

'Sit down, sir,' said she to him.

I racked my brain for some means of repairing my rudeness; but how much more apt and delicate are women! my wife found it at once in a trifle—it was in offering him the best chair in the room. But we had no money, and I knew not how to supply the deficiency.

'This coat,' repeated he again, with emotion, 'proves to you, mr. Parson, how much I am to be pitied. Alas! I have seen happier days! but poverty——oh how cruel it is when it obliges us to have recourse to pity! believe me, mr. Parson, it is the hardest of sacrifices to expose one's self thus to contempt; for even the very children think they have a right to regard the poor with scorn.'

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Mina, my second daughter, and our youngest children, who were looking at him with an infantine curiosity, turned away their heads, blushing with confusion.

Elizabeth, on the contrary, my good and sensible eldest girl, who had gone into a corner to hide some tears which my first harsh answer had excited—Elizabeth drew near, and looked at him with an air of the tenderest interest, as if to let him see, instead of the contempt of which he spoke, the soft tears of compassion.

'My rudeness,' said I to him, in a voice choked with shame, 'my apparent rudeness was not in my heart; it was, I assure you, sad necessity that compelled me to refuse even a feeble succor: we have not a penny of money in the house.'

My wife added—'the little we had, we have given to a very unfortunate woman.'

The emotion of the stranger was visible. He rose up, walked about, wiped his eyes; then he said to us, with a bow—'I ask a thousand pardons for having given you today the painful sentiment of refusing another unfortunate.'

My wife, almost as much moved as Elizabeth, conjured him to stay breakfast with us. After some entreaties, he consented. Immediately the children went out all together, and returned, bringing each something for the breakfast, which by this method was ready in a minute.

'Oh!' cried the stranger, on seeing the activity with which every one of them strove to serve him, 'with what angels of heaven am I surrounded!'—then composing himself, he said to us—'I have not time to stay any longer; but I go with a heart penetrated with your reception of me, with your goodness. Never shall I forget this seraphic family,' said he, looking at my children.

My wife then besought him to remain a moment longer; and giving me a significant look, ran to the drawer that contained our little treasure of rare pieces, and open-

ed it. The children uttered cries of joy, and clapped their hands; for they well knew what was there, and quickly guessed the intention of their mother.

'Oh yes, yes, mamma!' cried they all together.

She took out an old ducat, and presented it to the stranger with that irresistible grace she knew how to give every thing. He hesitated.

'Oh take it, sir!' cried the children all at once, clasping their little hands.

The timid Elizabeth approached, took his hand, and said to him, with her expressive look and melting voice —'do not refuse us, I beseech you! do not let us think you are angry with us!—good stranger, do not humiliate us! do not refuse us!'

He submitted, took the ducat, and went away in silence: but that expressive silence was worth all he could have said.

'That man does not deceive us,' said my wife, looking after him: 'did I possess but that ducat, I would have divided it with him.'

Her six children and I all embraced her. Our hearts were so content—so lightened! Elizabeth appeared plunged in reflection. On a sudden she lifted her hands and eyes to heaven, exclaiming, with a voice truly celestial—'oh how happy must the Almighty be!'

CHAP. XIII.

My family.

Ah! yes, surely the stranger said right!—'it is hard, very hard to support poverty:' and I have experienced it more than once. My living was inconsiderable—my income very small; but yet, in the commencement, after my marriage, we managed so well that, little as it was, it sufficed. I bounded with joy at the approach of st Sylvester's day,* when I owed nothing, and that there remained still something to buy my Augusta a pretty ribbon, a cap, or other trifle for a new year's gift; and this is what I never omitted.

Let the rich not sneer at what I say: I owed nothing—I made a little present to my wife, and I was richer far than they. During three years I enjoyed this satisfaction; the fourth, all went wrong; and on st. Sylvester's day, instead of jumping with joy, I saw with grief that there was not only nothing left, but that I was twenty crowns in debt. I would not have told it to my wife, but it was she who kept our accounts, and therefore knew it as well as I, so that I could not save her that inquietude. I had a little present for her, and this time I dared not offer it, she was sitting down so sorrowfully, with her head leaning on her hand. She did not weep, but her look expressed uneasiness, even while she held to her breast her little Charles, whom she was then nursing.

* The thirty-first of December

'My heart, there remains nothing this time,' said she, without raising her eyes, but with an accent that pierced me to the soul.

I took Elizabeth, our eldest daughter, who was about two years old, and was playing near us; I lifted her in my arms, and approached her mother.

'There remain still these dear children, and our love: what do we wish for more?—what more do we want?' cried I, pressing the little child to my bosom; and my wife let fall some sweet tears upon her babe.

I dropped on my knees in the middle of the room, still holding my child in my arms, and returning thanks to god for my happiness. Augusta, occupied in giving the breast to her infant, could not get up; but one of her arms was extended toward heaven, and her countenance had an expression of maternal love and pride, which I shall never forget as long as I live. I thought her more beautiful at that moment than she had ever appeared before—more than the day when I led her, elated with my good fortune, to the altar. If my book have occasion for an apology, behold it is made!

From that day my wife redoubled her attention to the economy of her house, and every thing was put in the most perfect order, in such a manner that, without apparently diminishing our expences, it cost us much less. I wish I dared to draw the attention of the reader to her plans, which were minute without doubt, and might perhaps appear trivial upon paper; but they were charming in reality, as we knew how to convert our cares into pleasures. It was a day of rejoicing when my wife had herself made a new coat either for me or the children, and that we were dressed in it. It was another festival again when, without the help of any laborer, I had dug sowed, and raked my little garden. I calculated what I had saved; I began to think of my little new year's gifts, and I enjoyed by antici-

pation the pleasure they would give my family. When that day arrived, I never failed to range my children all in a line, according to their age, before their mother, and to say to her—'behold our riches!' then we would embrace each other; and that day was the festival of love and happiness.

At the end of nine years we had six children; and heaven knows how Augusta could contrive to clothe them all, and ourselves, comfortably and decently, and to nurse them besides! but I have always said that maternal love can do miracles. The legacy of my father-in-law contributed to render our circumstances a little more easy. I could even put by, as is already known, a small sum of rare ducats, to serve in cases of emergency, or to enable me to bring up my children.

My family was like a little state in a desert island, separated from the rest of the world. We had no communication with our neighbors: all were richer than we; their acquaintance would involve us in expences too great for our means—we were obliged to renounce it. It was impossible for us to send any of our children to a boarding school—we had not even an idea of it. I took charge of their education; and I can do myself the justice to say, that I fulfilled it with the willingness and zeal of a good father.

I had few books, and they were only some classics. Not possessing any means to procure others, I had read them over a hundred times: my wife herself knew them almost by heart; for in the winter evenings, while she sat to her work, I read them to her in german. I knew english, which I had learned at the university; and I had some good works in that language. I knew french likewise; but I had not a single book, so I forgot it insensibly. My brother-in-law, the paper-maker, brought me every year from Leipsic the catalogue of books sold at the fair, and, from time to time, some journals: it was only through them I had still any notion of modern literature. When they were brought, my passion for composition awaken-

ed: it was then that I would get ready my paper and my title-pages, and during some time I could speak of nothing else to my wife; and then I read my Acontius, and then the difficulty abashed me. I locked up my quires, and thought no more about it until the next fair. Augusta called these periodical fits, my literary flow and ebb.

Our modern literature consisted of Gellert, and the first volume of Klopstock's Messiah. We read these works again and again, with a pleasure which would have communicated to their authors, if they had been witnesses of it. When we found in the catalogues, of waste paper which came to our hands, the names of Lessing, Wieland, Mendelsohn, Gessner, &c. &c. cited as stars of the first magnitude in the literary firmament, I could perceive the eyes of my children sparkle with the desire of becoming acquainted with their works; and my heart was rent at not being able to procure them an enjoyment they desired so passionately.

Since the death of my good friend, the pewterer (with whom I had become reconciled) I had not a single acquaintance in the city.

All the neighboring country ministers had nothing but books of theology: what could I then do? I resolved not to speak to my children of books I could not get for them, and to content myself with what I picked up of modern literature in the sheets of waste paper that came with the bibles and catechisms I was in the habit of getting for the use of my parishioners. Alas! the fragments of our good works only made me regret my not being able to read them throughout.

My children loved reading with a passion that was augmented by my respect for books and authors. The three eldest had read over my little library so often, that there was nothing left for the youngest but shreds: however, the memory of the former supplied the place of the torn leaves.

What delighted me above all in these dear children, was their sweet union. They loved each other with

more than fraternal tenderness; perhaps it was after the example of their parents—perhaps, also, that, having no other companions, those nature had given them, were the dearer: but their union was perfect; and all my little interior was but one heart and one mind.

Winter was the time especially devoted to study. My wife had exacted that her girls should take the same lessons as their brothers. 'Not that it may be useful to them,' said she; 'for what else do they want but to know how to be happy daughters and good wives: but it is that our children may be the fonder of each other—that the one may know nothing more than the other, and that all may learn to be good brothers and good sisters.

I found this pretension of my wife rather singular at first; but when at the first lesson of english I gave my Charles, I saw how he regarded his sister Elizabeth, I complied with the desire of my wife; and when afterwards I heard those dear children say to one another—'we have all learned together,' I felicitated myself on having consented.

English was therefore learned in common. My three eldest begged that the others might take lessons also. At first I refused; having but a single copy of Hume's history of England, I was afraid it would not suffice for so many scholars; but the zeal of the children made up for the defect. They copied it intirely twice over, each writing in turn; and this exercise taught them the language with the greater facility, as they were extremely emulous to justify their own desires and those of their mother, and to prove to me that they were in the right.

One or two volumes of the Spectator were soon copied in like manner, and known by heart. Thus my children acquired a new source of pleasure on being able to read about a dozen good works that I possessed in english.

My wife took upon her to teach them music. She was perfectly adequate to the task; her talent was improved since our marriage. Notwithstanding her cares

as a good housewife, and mother of a family, she had cultivated it from taste, and to teach it to her children. She took from her sleep the time requisite for practising, going to bed an hour later, and getting up an hour sooner. She was a perfect timeist, and had a great deal of expression both in her execution on the instrument, and in singing; but when she played extempore, which she did frequently, not having any written or printed music, the slow melancholy strain was what she preferred. My two eldest, Elizabeth and Charles, made great progress in a short time, as well as little Annette, my fourth child; but the three others, Mina, Lewis, and Wilhelm, after many fruitless essays, were forced to renounce it.

When the english lesson was over, I went up to my room with my three boys, to teach them the ancient languages. Necessity compelled me to use the same method as for the english—that of making them copy out, in order to multiply our books. It suceeeded in the same manner, and engraved promptly in their young memories what sometimes gives such trouble to learn.

In a few days my daughters began to fret at passing several hours of the day separated from me and their brothers, and murmured loudly against latin and greek. Their mother pressed me to give my lessons in the parlor. After several refusals, founded on the dread of distraction for the ones, and disgust for the others, I consented, and found it to do very well. My daughters listened to their brothers with pleasure; but let nothing slip. They laughed when their accent was bad, or when they mistook one word for another; and the attention of the boys redoubled. They often asked them the explanation of a phrase; and the others strove to give it, in order not to appear ignorant. Charles read well, but too slowly, and with pedantry. Mina called him the schoolmaster, made game of him, and Charles read more gracefully. Lewis, on the contrary, hesitated, stammered. 'I have not heard a word, Lewis,' observed the gentle Elizabeth; and Lewis read more correctly.

'Teach me some of the pretty fables of Phædrus,' said Annette to little Wilhelm; and Wilhelm, proud of having something to teach, made haste to learn them, and wrote them out before he left off, in order to read them to his sister.

My daughters were at the spinning-wheel, sewing, or looking after the household affairs, while they listened to their brothers. When they remarked that their criticisms had some effect, they became more severe: at one time they found fault with a turn of expression—at another, the repetition of a word. Mina, my second daughter, was arch, and found a subject of pleasantry in every thing. When the lesson was finished, and a history interrupted—'the remainder in our next,' cried the amiable, little rogue; and when she saw us resume it next morning, she would call us the numbers of the Spectator.

My sons asked me to make their sisters translate too: They did not wait to be intreated; and two hours in the evening, once a week, were set apart for this exercise. Thus an emulation was established between them, which produced the best effect: their style was formed—their ideas unfolded; and their parents had nothing to do, but not to stop wheels that went of themselves.

I was really surprised to see how the children advanced, extended their intelligence, acquired knowledge and talents, became at once amiable and learned; and all that without masters, without assistance, without going out of the village, nor ever seeing any body but their parents. How happy then were those parents! our love and our pride enjoyed it equally: those dear children constituted at once my glory and my happiness.

What delightful evenings did we pass, when, assembled round a table, after a collation of fruit from our garden, every one read in turn their little translation! the modern languages my daughters had learned, were easier; but, on the other hand, my sons got more lessons: thus all was compensated.—each in turn had the advan-

tage, and never did a sentiment of envy start up to trouble their felicity; each enjoyed the success of the other as if it were his own. My daughters did not learn the ancient languages; but, by means of their brothers' translations, they knew almost as well every classial work in my little library. On my side, I gave all the assistance to my children that was in my power. Besides the hours of lesson, I gave them in the evening some instructive lecture, which related to the subject of the morning, and furnished matter for reflection. The lives of the philosophers Diogenes and Laertius were very useful, as well as the treatise on wisdom by Thales.

It was in the conversations especially, which took place after reading, that the character of my children discovered itself in the clearest manner. Elizabeth, my eldest, mild, good, and sensible, loved every thing that accorded with her heart: a trait of beneficence, of filial or fraternal love, instantaneously filled her eyes with tears. This child from her infancy had the same disposition to tenderness, a sort of soft melancholy and reserve. Mina said of her—'Eliza cannot enjoy life *drily*, like us; she must moisten it with her tears.' And this observation did not ill depict the sentimental turn of her sister. In our readings she always noticed and repeated whatever had a tint of sadness. Sophocles was for her the greatest of men, because he had said—'*the greatest happiness of man is, his being mortal;*' and Pindar, the first of poets, on account of this passage—'*life is but the dream of a shadow.*' She declared this a sublime thought; 'for,' said she, with her noble look, 'it paints with a single stroke the nothing of life.'

'The nothing of life!' repeated little Mina pertly: 'I know not how you appreciate it, Eliza; but I believe man is something, and myself a great deal.'

'Oh Mina!' answered she, smiling sadly, 'what is life? an instant, composed of tears, sufferings, cares, vain labors, sacrifices, and griefs, which finishes by old age—that is contemned, and by the tomb, where we are forgotten.'

'And still I find all that very pretty, very agreeable,' said Mina; 'only that old age, which is far away from me, and that ugly tomb, of which I do not like even to think.'

Charles, my eldest son, had much of the character of his sister Elizabeth, but of a firmer and more energetic kind. In the ancient authors what struck him most, was whatever indicated greatness of soul, and a noble simplicity.

'I have seen nothing more beautiful,' said he to me, 'than the letter of the spartans in Xenophon.'

'Which, my son? go fetch the book.'

'There is no occasion—I know it by heart.—'*We are beaten—Mindanus is killed—and we are in want of every thing.*'

He admired also that of Lysander after the glorious conquest of Athens:—'*Athens is subdued.*' Every thing that bore the stamp of virtue, although austere, pleased the soul of this child, and seemed to electrify him. He did not know which he liked better—Socrates or Diogenes. The seriousness he gave to his dissertations was a continual subject of pleasantry to Mina, who spared nobody; but her railery, piquing without malice, forced us all to smile: however, each of us and Mina herself, preferred Elizabeth and Charles to all the rest.

Little Mina, with her round face, her cocked nose, and sprightly eyes, enlivened and diverted us all. Notwithstanding the extreme difference of character between her and her sister, they cherished each other tenderly; and we were charmed that the gaiety of Mina sometimes drew aside the veil of sadness which obscured Elizabeth. Lewis, my fourth child, who resembled Mina a little, and loved to jest, called his two eldest sisters Heraclitus and Democritus: 'only,' said he to Elizabeth, caressing her, 'that you have neither the misanthropy nor long black beard of that philosopher.'

Thus the innocent prattling of those dear children, the variety of their manners, the budding of their wit and sense made the charm of our life.

Necessity forced me to recur to the ancient writers for their instruction, since I had no other books; and perhaps their assistance is too much neglected in modern education. How many sublime thoughts do they contain—short, energetic maxims, traits of magnanimity, ingenious and striking comparisons, which impress the minds of children, fortify their young hearts, illumine their reason, and inculcate the principles of sound morality. I made great use of them in my lessons. One evening I was reading to them in Plato—'the man who does not consult his experience, is unceasingly beginning his life over again; he is like a child who should be born every morning. He who does listen to it, resembles an old man who complains of having lived too long.'

I wished to explain this last part to them; but Mina burst out a laughing, and said—'so, to paint man, he should be represented as a child just born, with a long beard and a big wig; and in this manner you would have all the philosopher's ideas before your eyes.'

I could not help smiling—every one burst into laughter: there was only Charles who chid his sister. But was she not right? and I myself, with my grey hairs, am I not still often like a child just born!'

It was not then possible to say much of my three youngest, Lewis, Annette, and Wilhelm: they resembled their brother and sisters, with some shades of difference. Lewis laughed with Mina—Annette was named *the Sage*, and Wilhelm, *Alexander the great;* that suffices to give an idea of their characters.

Such was our life. In the spring and summer the muses gave place to the labors of the garden. Often, however, would we recline all together under the shade

of an arbor of scarlet kidney beans, with Livy, Hume, or Virgil, which Charles had undertaken to translate in the style of Klopstock. I let my children enjoy the sweet illusion that they were well informed, while I saw but two well their ignorance, and sighed that the sun of german literature shone in all its splendor, without a single ray coming to enlighten my family.

'Well, good god!' said my wife to me, 'let them alone! what is it they want?'

'What do they want, dear friend? alas! every thing, absolutely! when I read the catalogues of the fair at Leipsic, I see hundreds of works composed solely for children and youth; and I then lament my poverty. At present our first geniuses write for children. There are treatises on natural history coming out beyond number. I have indeed Pliny and Aristotle; but since two thousand years, my dear friend, that science, as well as others, has made great progress; and in Pliny, Aristotle, and Virgil himself there are many mistakes to be found—and botany and mineralogy—oh! of how many things, dear wife, must my children be ignorant!'

'But, my love,' said Augusta, 'I do not see any great harm in it, although they should not know the plants that grow in America, which they will never see, nor the precious stones, of which they will not have a single one in the course of their lives. They will do much better; they will know the true diamonds necessary to man—virtue and the love of their duty.'

'Ah!' replied I, 'that is very well; but I could wish they knew a little physiology, and understood something of the interior of man—of the arrangement of the nerves and muscles—of the conformation of the body, the joints, &c. &c.

'They know the human heart, dear friend; and, what is better still, they have themselves a heart which is good, humane and simple. A good heart, is not that sufficient?'

'Ah, dear Augusta! the knowledge of the heart—

you well know that I pique myself upon it! but at present it is quite another thing; and myself, that is enough to say, I believe I should find it a difficult matter. Every thing changes with years, and the human heart also has its revolutions: we should follow all those variations.—In modern books I see nothing else but philosophical romances, moral tales, secret histories of the human heart, &c. &c. Who can tell, dear friend, the fate that awaits our daughters—what their young hearts must undergo; and if those books might not prove guardian angels of their innocence and virtue; one year more and our children will have read all my library.'

'Well, then,' said my wife, 'since you think all that so necessary for them, have we not our little treasure of curious coins? can we employ it to a better purpose? take them, dear friend, and go to town yourself, to purchase the books that may be useful to our children.'

That was what I would be at, and I was very well pleased at having led my wife to it.

CHAP. XIV.

The Bookseller.

That evening, when we were all assembled, I informed my children of what they had never yet suspected—which is, that there existed thousands of other books besides those they knew—that there were new ones pub-

lished every day, and that literature was an inexhaustible mine.

'Your mother and I have resolved, my dear children,' added I, 'to employ our little hoard of rare ducats, in procuring you the pleasure of reading some of those interesting works; and I will go myself to town to choose and bring them to you.'

Every eye sparkled with joy; and I went to take out our little treasure, which had not been touched, except for the interesting mendicant: we valued it pretty nearly at fifty crowns.

'With this sum, I hope,' said I, 'to bring you what will amuse and instruct you at least for some years. We must be very careful in reading them, to keep them clean, and when we shall have extracted the gold from this precious oar, we will sell them again for two thirds of their value, and buy others. In this manner, my dear children, we shall read a long time before we come to the last ducat.'

To give them an idea of modern literature, and see what they would desire most, I read them the last catalogue of the fair of Leipsic. At all the titles a little singular, Mina would cry out—'oh that papa, if you please!'

Lewis wished for comedies—Charles poems—little Wilhelm, histories of conquerors and travels—and Elizabeth, tragedies.

I went to look for some old journals, and read them the advertisements of different works. Then all wishes concurred for novels and poetry. I marked down some treatises on natural history, geography, and anthropology. The expectation of the new library was, for my innocent children, a far greater pleasure, than would be to others that of the most brilliant entertainment; they spoke of nothing else every evening. My daughters offered to spin two hours more every day, to augment our little fund. In fine I set out for the city, where I had not been for many years, accompanied by the benedictions of the whole family.

I was sufficiently embarrassed with my commission. By means of the catalogues, I knew the names of the most celebrated authors; but I knew that celebrity is not always a sure criterion of a good work, and especially of pure morality; and I wished for no others.

On the road I began to arrange my plan: I added to —I retrenched my list; but when arrived in the city, I was not the nearer to a determination. It would have been requisite to have a learned, upright friend to guide my choice, and I had none—I absolutely knew nobody.

I entered therefore, by chance, the shop of the most considerable bookseller. I had the pleasure of finding myself in the middle of the productions of our best writers; but, alas! mine were not there yet! in looking over the immense bales of books in sheets, ranged alphabetically, I stopped a long time before the letter B, and reflected, with inexpressible anxiety of heart, what happiness, what pride I should feel, If I saw there, in large capital letters—BEMRODE'S WORKS! with what respect would the shopmen, who did not pay great attention to me, regard me, when I should have told them it was I who was this Bemrode!

There were several purchasers in the ware-house. I let them go away one after another, and was entering upon my business, by asking to look at some prayer-books, when at the very moment, I saw a big, good looking man open an inside door:—it was the bookseller himself. He came over to me instantly, and giving me a hearty shake of the hand—'welcome mr. pastor,' said he, 'welcome to your house!'

'To my house, sir!'

'Yes, to your house—to your property,' looking round on all the shelves covered with books. 'For more than one reason, mr. pastor you should consider yourself at home, Have not the first writers been theologians? the philologers, the philosophers, moralists, mathematicians, mataphysicians, have they not com-

menced by theology? is it not the basis of all the sciences, even of jurisprudence and medicine? thus, my dear pastor, have I not reason to say you are at home here? even at present, the two thirds of my commerce lie in works of theology.'

He then asked me my name, and of what village I was pastor. When I mentioned *Bemrode* and *Eizebach*, he made me repeat them, and I thought I remarked something singular in his countenance. He pressed my hand more amicably again, and proposed to me to breakfast with him, which I agreed to with pleasure.

The civil reception of this man determined me at once.

'I see,' observed I to him, 'that chance has favored me, and that I have found what I want.'

I took out my little treasure, exhibited it upon the table, and begged him to point me out the best works I could have for that sum.

He took my old pieces of gold, and looked at them smiling.

'This is rare money,' said he; 'we must give you also rare and good standard merchandise. Let us see, my dear pastor, what do you choose to have? do you want orthodoxy, or heterodoxy?—or do you prefer something between the two, which, as they say, is neither fish nor flesh?'

'I do not want theology,' answered I; 'mine is in my head and in my heart; and, in point of theology, I esteem only that book,' laying my hand on a heap of bibles that lay near me. 'Since I have been in my village, I have not had a single occasion to make use of my dogmatical scholastic.'

'I believe you are right, my dear pastor; theology is in a moment of crisis, it must get time to recover. As to philosophy, it might be said to sleep, and to dream in sleeping: the works of our philosophers are like dreams—incoherent reminiscences, without any result. People are tired of reading, in other terms, what has

been already said by Wolf, Leibnitz, and Baumgarten: so let us see, what do you like?'

'I would like,' said I, 'three or four select novels, that might form the taste of my children, and give them an idea of the world, without tainting the purity of their innocent hearts.'

The bookseller shook his head, without replying.

'I must have likewise,' continued I, 'some books of natural history, modern geography, and some good poetry; in short, what may be useful for the instruction of a family that has always lived in retirement, innocence, simplicity, and the exercise of domestic virtues. That money, sir, was, I avow, a pear reserved to allay thirst, which I had resolved not to touch, unless in case of urgent want; but in fact, is it not the first of wants, to instruct ourselves?—and can I employ it better, than to make my children happy?'

'Are they girls?' enquired he, with a pensive look.

'Three boys and three girls. My wife and I have done all that depended upon us for their education; but our means were limited, and they are in utter want of the polish of the world, and of modern literature; otherwise they are sufficiently instructed for their age—they have more than once read all the books in my little library.'

'And of what books is it composed?' said the bookseller, with a look still more thoughtful.

I named them; and while I was going through with the nomenclature, he kept frowning to such a point, that I became embarrassed and confused.

'And your children,' said he, have read all those ancient authors, from one end to the other without choice, or distinction?'

'Certainly,' replied I; 'there is about a hundred pages they could not read, and that I have cut out of those works: if I had listened to my wife, I should have cut out a good deal more. But you cannot form an idea how innocent our children are!'

'Put your ducats back into your pocket, my dear pastor, and do me the favor of dining with me to day. In a few days I shall have business near Eizebach, and I will bring you myself the works that will suit you. In the meanwhile I will lend you some volumes to keep your children in patience; I will give you what is the most admired at present—sublime works, where you will find the most profound knowledge of the human heart; in short you shall see. There are also some pages that your wife would counsel you to suppress; and I counsel you to read them to yourself before you put them into the hands of your children.'

He made me then go up stairs with him, and introduced me into a saloon richly furnished, in which were an elderly lady and four young girls.

'Here are,' said he to me, my sister and her daughters, who live with me.'

He took a book out of the hands of the youngest, and put it in his pocket, saying—'if you have occasion for it, take it out of the library.'

Then he took out of a glass case three or four volumes richly bound, and laid them on a table. The young ladies eyed me from head to foot with a boldness and a little air of disdain, that intimidated me.

The good bookseller presented me as one of his best friends, and added he, with a smile of which I alone comprehended the meaning, 'one of the supporters of my library.' We then chatted together at one of the windows upon different subjects of literature, and upon the classics and the ancients, whom he was pretty well acquainted with: he had himself been a theologian, and had

studied to advantage. Insensibly a little society collected, and the conversation became general. I could not take a part in it; there was no talk but of modern works, the news of the city, the fine arts, and the theatre.

The young ladies displayed all their talents, and the uncle showed me some of their drawings, which appeared to me to be done in a masterly style. They played on the piano. It was like a new instrument to me: there was no similarity between their manner, and that of my wife or children:—they moved the head, the shoulders, the body, as if all that was necessary to make the keys give the proper sound; surely they give themselves a great deal of pains, and this method of playing seemed to me very difficult.

The bookseller made me remark every thing. He seemed to say—'behold the education thou wishest to give thy children!' he was in the wrong if he supposed I had any such notion: I was far from imagining that my children—that my simple and good children could ever arrive at such a towering degree of elegance—that they could acquire such a facility of diction, such nicety of perception, such assurance of taste, and such precision in their judgments upon the arts and sciences.

At dinner the conversation was animated, and turned upon many various subjects. In order not to appear absolutely mute, I cited some verses of Gellert, which appeared to me to be applicable to what was saying. They smiled, and seemed not to set a great value upon my Gellert. My entertainer frowned, and hastily directed his discourse to me. I comprehended that he wanted to turn my attention from something; and probably it was the laugh and sneering look of the company at the poor country parson. After dinner he gave me the books he had laid apart, and renewed his advice to read them alone, or to my wife, before I gave them to the children. 'But,' said he, taking up a big volume in the library, 'since they understand english, here is something to content them in the interim.' It was a system of natural history in that language, with very fine engravings.

I left this excellent man with a heart overflowing with gratitude; and he promised me not to delay coming to see me.

CHAP. XV.

The Perusal.

My family came out about a league to meet me, and I could perceive on every visage the marks of the most eager impatience. I recounted my little history, promising them the visit of my friend, the bookseller.

'And the books he has lent you?' exclaimed they all, with the sparkling eye of curiosity, and stretching their little hands.

I was not a little embarrassed. I had looked them over on the way, and had seen enough to be convinced that the bookseller had reason to advise me to read them the first, so much good and harm might they do. I told my children to be easy until we got to the house. When we arrived there, I gave them the natural history, with its beautiful engravings.

'And the others?' cried they again all together.

I promised to let them have them when that would be finished. They entreated me to let them see at least the titles. I refused seriously.

They read a good deal of their natural history. The

new ideas it suggested to them, enchanted them; and, from that evening, their old Pliny received sentence of death. But the better they were pleased with this book, the more was their curiosity excited to read the others.

As soon as they were retired to bed, I examined my books again, and saw the name of a very celebrated writer. I sat down by my wife, and read it to her in a half voice, because the young folks were not yet asleep.

My bookseller was right: he had good reason to extol the charm of this work. The style produced the effect of the finest music, and the interest augmented at every page:—I comprehended then the smile of disdain at my old Gellert. What easy, harmonious prose!—how the language appeared to obey the thoughts of the author!—what precision! what life! what impetuosity!—not a useless, not a neglected word! what a difference between this manner, and that of the old writers! how one feels hurried on, so as not to be able to quit the book! innocence so affecting!—virtue so sublime!—the combats of reason and the heart rendered with so much verity; and the passions with so much energy!—the misfortunes of the hero appeared to be my own; and I could not continue to read, for the tears overpowered me. Love was painted in this work with such burning traits, that the most icy heart would have been melted: all the riches of poetry were employed, not only to paint love as a devouring flame, but to light it up in the hearts of the readers.

'Ah!' cried I, laying down the book, and putting my hand to my breast, 'my bookseller was very right! how dangerous would such a reading be for the inflammable soul of our children!'

To my great surprise, my wife did not think the same.

'Ah! why should it be dangerous?' said she to me, with her innocent, tranquil look. 'My beloved friend,' and she pressed my hand, 'I dared not, I could not express myself thus when I espoused thee; but every thing

which this great writer says, I have felt, I have experienced for thee; it seems as if he had seen through my heart. Would there be any harm in letting our children learn that there is a sentiment that domineers all others—that constitutes the charm of life—that leads to virtue and happiness, for which man is created, and that god himself has placed in his heart, thou hast said it to me a thousand times, as the pledge of eternal felicity?

Pure, harmless soul! never had she loved any other but me! and with her, *love* and *virtue* were synonymous.

I recollected the beautiful Julia, and I attempted to make her perceive the possibility of the heart of our daughters going astray likewise. But all I could say was to no purpose: Julia appeared to her a species of monster too rare to cite, whose soul had been corrupted by her first education, and a combination of circumstances. She made, on the contrary, an argument of it to support her system.

'Thou seest,' said she, 'that she had never loved:—love and marriage would have rendered her virtuous.'

It did not appear to my Augusta possible that a woman could ever love any man but her husband, nor a husband any woman but his own wife. I cited the intendant, and the passion he had declared to her. She shrugged up her shoulders, and said it was nothing but libertinism, but vanity, and it had not the least affinity to love.

I was reduced to silence, and obliged to continue my reading. We came to a scene of infidelity, described with the same warmth as that of sentiment. Augusta was astonished that the author should dare to justify a perfidy, by casting it on the weakness of the heart; and soon begged me to cease.

'That author,' said she, 'does not in the least know the human heart.'

We were then both of opinion that this was not a book fit for our children to read; but from different reasons:

I, because the sweet passion of love was painted in it with too much vivacity; she, because she found it to be any thing else but love.

'Perhaps the others are better,' said she.

We read them the following days, and it was the same thing: beside the sublimest traits of virtue, was placed the most seducing image of vice; one was successively moved, transported, displeased, revolted, and still carried away by the magic of the style, and the interest of the situations.

'But is it not possible,' exclaimed I, 'to write upon any other subject than this frightful and cruel passion?'

'Thou callest it frightful and cruel,' said my wife; 'yet it appeared so delicious to thee! thou speakest strangely to-day, my dear; but thou art right—it is useless to give these books to our children to read. What could they learn by them? do they not know how much we love each other? we prove it—our example shows them sufficiently what love is. Does the heart want a book to learn to love? I had never read any of this kind when I gave thee mine; and even these do not express all I felt. But heaven preserve me from ever giving my children books to read, that represent infidelity and perfidy as a pardonable weakness!'

I was charmed to see her coincide with my idea. The books were locked up, and we contented ourselves with the natural history.

CHAP. XVI.

The experiment.

At last my bookseller arrived: he was very well received, and, after the first civilities, took me aside.

'Well,' enquired he, 'have you read the books I lent you?'

I answered him, with a shake of the head, that notwithstanding the great beauties with which they abounded, my children were too innocent to read them without danger, and that they had been locked up; and I related to him my conversation and little dispute with my wife on that head, explaining to him the motives of her security, and those of her indignation.

He smiled, and regarded her with emotion. Then he sat down in the middle of the group of children. They were at first very timid, but, encouraged by his caresses, they soon began to approach him with infantile confidence, and chat with him, each according to their particular character. Elizabeth alone was silent; but her smile and look declared so much! and then Minette prattled for her. Charles rehearsed his sentences of ancient authors; and the three youngest climbed upon his knees. I did not know what to think of the bookseller; every minute he became more serious with us, and more caressing with my children: he embraced them in turns, pressing them to his heart, and then regarded us with an air of tenderness.

The conversation ran upon different topics: the children grew quite familiar with our good bookseller, and

disclosed the ideas of their innocent hearts with the amiable candor of their age. Elizabeth went to the piano, and played some original airs: I was surprised at the attention with which the bookseller listened to her, and at his air of satisfaction; for the instrument I had heard at his house was a hundred times better, and his nieces had taken a vast deal more pains.

After having well examined my children, he asked my wife and me to accompany him into the garden, while my daughters were preparing the dinner. We sat down in the arbor: he placed himself between us, and took a hand on each side, which he pressed with emotion, while tears started in his eyes.

'What is the matter with you, my dear sir?' said I to him with surprise.

'You are,' cried he to us, 'a happy father and a happy mother: your children are charming; they merit all your tenderness, and I avow, it is this tenderness, this union which reigns among you, that has attached me to you. You do not, perhaps, suspect that I knew you before, and that you will be my benefactor,' continued he, squeezing my hand. 'When you came into my warehouse, and you had told me your name, and taken out your old ducats, which I already knew, I cannot tell you the pleasure I experienced, and my desire to do every thing to obtain your friendship, and that of your family: but let us make all the haste we can to give the dear children pleasure.'

He ordered his carriage into the court, having before left it at the inn, and took out some bottles of good wine, and then a quantity of books, which he distributed to my children.

'Do not be apprehensive,' said he, smiling, 'they may read them all; I now know your taste.'

'We have no other, my friend, than that of simple nature.'

'And that is the good, the true, and the beautiful,' said he, clapping me on the shoulder.

He added a thousand flattering things concerning ourselves, our children, their education, talents, innocence, and that taste for the true beautiful which appeared innate in them.

I did not give much attention to all his praises; I was taken up with what he had said in the garden, and repeated to myself from time to time '*his benefactor!*' I could not comprehend him, not having ever seen him before my journey to town: in fine, I conjured him to explain it to me, and he consented.

'You must know then, dear and respectable man,' said he, 'that about six months ago, taking a little excursion with one of my friends, the carriage broke down near this village. This accident obliged us to stop at the sign of the pitcher, which we found full of peasants, who were drinking and smoking. In a corner we saw a sort of beggar-woman, with a boy of ten or twelve years old. You shall know presently why I speak to you about her. The smith, after examining our carriage, told us it could not be mended till next day. The idea of passing the whole night in such a hole was insupportable: we asked some peasants what kind of a man was their parson, intending to demand hospitality of him until morning. One of them commenced your panegyric, in which all the rest joined: one praised your goodness—another your disinterestedness—a third your charity—a fourth your zeal—and several your attachment to your parishioners, and tenderness to your family, of which they gave a description as well as peasants could; but it was easily seen that their hearts dictated what they said. 'He has nothing to himself,' cried they all: 'and not a single voice, what is very rare, not a single voice was heard to contradict the general encomium; but all added that it was a great pity you were so poor, having so many children to bring up, and being, besides, the father of all the unfortunate.

'We were already much affected when the schoolmaster came in, and added still to our emotion by recounting to us some traits of your arrival here, which gave my friend and me the greatest desire to become acquainted with you; but, at the same time, we resolved not to give you the embarrasment of entertaining us, precisely because you were so good: we preferred supporting some inconveniences, and remained at the inn. But we wished at least to know your name, to write it upon our tablets: the schoolmaster told it us. Scarcely had he pronounced the word Bemrode, when the beggar-women raised her head, appeared surprised, and immediately went out.

'We heard her enquire the way to the parsonage, and she took that which was pointed out. Some time after we saw her come back: she had money in her hand, counted it, and then called for a good supper and a room, which she had not done previously. We concluded that it was you who gave her this money; and thus your goodness and charity were confirmed. In a few minutes afterward a servant came with a pretty large bundle, which she gave the beggar-woman, who took it without saying a word, and opened it before us. I acknowledge to you, my dear pastor, that your poverty became then very dubious in our eyes. This bundle contained not only some very good linen and clothes, but also a small sum of money, wrapped up in a paper, which the mendicant reckoned as before. 'No,' said we, 'a poor man who has a numerous family, does not give such alms.' We inquired more particularly into the state of your income; but it appeared to us in fact that it was not in proportion to your beneficence.'

Here I interrupted him.

'I did nothing in that, my dear friend,' cried I, 'but what I should do. That beggar was an old acquaintance, a miss Goldman, whom I had seen in a very different state.

And I related to him, in a few words, all I knew concerning her. He laughed, and said—'very well, my dear pastor, *do good to your enemies*. Do you recollect another

beggar who came the next morning, and to whom you gave a piece of gold?—you did not know him, did you?'

'No; but I remember him very well, I received him at first rudely enough, and I had a wrong to repair: I refused him at first. He was extremely well dressed, better than I in every respect, and his countenance beamed with health: however, he affected us considerably. Oh, he was a singular beggar-man, indeed!'

'Yes, very singular. He was—my friend.'

'Your friend!'

'Yes, the friend with whom I was travelling; a little singular, as you say, but otherwise a worthy, honest man; author, poet, and novelist, by profession. From all he heard said of you, he took a fancy to place you and your family in one of his novels. He always goes on thus, studying nature in its simplicity; in which indeed he finds his account. It is I who print all his works: I am of course deeply interested in their success; and I believe that in which he will delineate you, will bring me in a good deal of money; therefore you will be my benefactor. I partook then of his desire; but how contrive to be introduced into your house? he desired that it might not be a formal visit, and wished to see you in your privacy, and in some affecting situation. We struck out a variety of plans, which had all some difficulties; in fine, my friend hit upon that of presenting himself as a beggar—'he is poor,' said he: 'he gave away a great deal yesterday evening; let us try if he will give away any thing this morning.'—He took off his coat, put on his frock, and set out. Shortly after I saw him return at once joyful and affected even to tears, showing me the antique ducat that you had given him, not having any other money. He recounted the particulars of his visit, which made me shed tears in my turn; and he left me the ducat to send to you: here it is,' said he to me, taking it out of his pocket; 'put it up along with its fellows.'

'And your friend,' said I, 'has he really introduced us into his book?'

'He is occupied with it at this moment. I hope you will be pleased with it, and the public still more, and myself more than you all. We returned home, speaking of you incessantly; and he began his novel.

'I should have sent you the ducat sooner, but, pardon me, my dear pastor, it has befallen me, as too frequently happens to the rich, to forget or neglect the affair which seems to them a trifle, and which may be very important to him who is concerned: I put it off then from day to day, intending to bring it myself in one of my jaunts. But chance led you to my house: you told me your name; I saw the ducats; and the sentiments a knowledge of your generous conduct had inspired me with long before, were renewed with added force. That I told you not so at first, was because I wanted likewise to furnish a chapter to my friend's book; and now it is done,' said he, laughing.

CHAP. XVII.

Counsel and invitation.

I SHALE henceforth call our good bookseller by his baptismal name, Frederic; it was thus that his sister and nieces called him at home, and he desired to be likewise for us all, '*our uncle Frederic.*' He passed the whole day with us, and appeared highly pleased with it. In the evening, before the time of going away, he took my wife

and me apart, and said seriously—'my worthy friends, you must return me all the novels I have lent you. You have made a master-piece of education, my dear pastor: I leave you enchanted with the acquirements, the talents, and, above all, the innocence of your children. It is very probable, however, that they will themselves act some novels for you: your daughters are beautiful, and the heart of your Elizabeth is *tempered* in love; but they must not read one, no, not even the best. What they might learn in it of good, by the example of virtue, and a taste for the beautiful, their hearts will teach them in course; and as to the three youngest, their feelings must not be excited and developed too soon by giving them a factious sensibility. No, my friend,' said he, taking up his books, 'no novels; I will permit here none but that of the swindler of ducats upon you and your family: if he paint you such as I behold you at present, that one will be interesting, and not at all dangerous.'

'A novel upon us!' exclaimed my wife: 'what can be said about us? except my husband who writes every thing, nobody could find in all our lives matter for a single page.'

'You know nothing concerning it, Augusta,' said I with emotion. 'There is not a moment of your spotless life that might not furnish a page capable of interesting good hearts. Yes, I wish this book was written—I say this *book*, for it would not be a *novel!* All our sentiments are ingenuous, and we need not be afraid of their being brought to light: as to the incidents, I leave them to the author, or to fate.'

'And I,' cried Augusta, 'I pray heaven that nothing ever happen us which may furnish the subject of a novel or of a history! not even should the great man who wrote those we have read, take upon him to write it, not even were they the finest and best things in the world: the fewer events, the more happiness and tranquility. If we are good, does it not suffice that God and our conscience know it?'

'Excellent woman,' said Frederic, 'you have just now

said what deserves to be printed! I know very well that the public wish to find in a novel assassinations, poisoning, seductions, misfortune on misfortune; and I say with you, may heaven preserve you from having a single page to gratify readers who love this description! But all are not of the same taste; there are some yet who would read with interest and pleasure the history of your simple life; but your children must not even read the simplest novel before they themselves have children. This is what I had to say to you.'

I was so penetrated with the tone with which he expressed this, that I called my three eldest, and giving back the books to uncle Frederic before them, told them that those were called *novels*—that such reading was not fit for them, and that I forbid it. Elizabeth and Charles assured me they had no more inclination to read them; Mina, on the contrary, manifested curiosity and regret on seeing the books go into uncle Frederic's pocket.

I took an opportunity to lead him into the garden alone, and acquainted him, in confidence, with the passion I entertained so long of making myself known as an author, and immediately mentioned a dozen of the titles upon which I had already meditated, and for which the paper was ready prepared. He smiled and said—'you are right to have thought of the title; when a title is found the work is half done. I know some very good writers who have never been able to invent a title that suited their works: it is the bookseller that must give himself that trouble; and it is often the title that makes the book sell. But, my dear sir, do not believe that the profession of an author will render you happy; quite the reverse. The interest I feel for your welfare induces me to throw a light upon the dangers you want to expose yourself to.

'If an author have any reputation, he is not allowed a moment of tranquility: all eyes are upon him; and the crowd of young authors with which Germany abounds, lay themselves down to persecute him: the most modest assume his name, to pass off bad productions; those who

are possessed of vanity, and who think that they at least equal him, strive to crush him by a thousand ways, and declare open war against him. The better his book is, the more it is criticised, torn to pieces, pulverized in the journals. Is he not cited? does he provoke neither envy nor blame? nobody reads him; the edition goes to the grocer; and he remains as if he had written nothing. Is he of abilities to rise like an eagle, and soar superior to criticism? It befals him as it does the rich, who are reproached with having stolen their wealth. If a single person insinuate that he has pilfered such or such an idea from such an author, ancient or foreign, the whole mob set up the hue and cry of 'plagiary! plagiary!'—choose between these ordeals, my friend; but remember that, do what you will, you must undergo one or the other.'

'I shall remain anonymous.'

'Pooh! the reviewers will not allow it; they force an author to make himself known, or they guess it, and add a thousand satires to his name: and then should not an honest man avow what he pubsishes!'

I was a little discouraged for the moment, but I did not renounce my literary projects notwithstanding; on the contrary, my intimacy with a bookseller appeared a favorable omen, and gave me more than ever the hope of realizing them.

When he was on the point of leaving us, he invited my wife, my three eldest children, and me, to pay him a visit in the city. Augusta objected at first, through fear of meeting with the mendicant novelist, and apprehensive that every thing we should say would be printed; she could not endure the idea of our simple life becoming the subject of a novel; therefore she took for a pretext that our children were too bashful, and not dressed in a manner fit to appear in the world.

Frederic would not be refused; he told my wife that it

was time to give our children a little more assurance—that the coat did not make the man—and that he should have nobody with him but his family. 'I would have invited the dear beggar-man,' said he, 'but he is absent.'

My wife then suffered herself to be persuaded; she only put off the day, to make some little toilet preparations. As to me, I was charmed with whatever might cement my acquaintance with the good bookseller; and my children, with what joy did they hear of this invitation, and of this journey, the first they had ever made!—how they expressed their acknowledgments to uncle Frederic!—how they threatened him, laughing, that they would plunder his library! When he was going, the whole six ran into his arms, hung upon his neck, and cried, as long as he could hear them—'adieu, uncle Frederic! farewell, good uncle Frederic!'

CHAP. XVIII.

The preparations.

I DID not, I avow, comprehend too clearly what kind of preparations my wife proposed to make for this journey to the city: doubtless it must have regarded her daughters' dress; but we had not the means to dress them, and my wife and children appeared to me charming in their village simplicity.

'It is the first time,' said she to me, 'that they are going to town, and to the house of so rich a man. We

must not make our good uncle Frederic ashamed: every thing in his house is so elegant, we should make too striking a contrast!'

'I confess,' replied I, 'that our girls are not so elegant as the bookseller's nieces, and our intendant's wife; but that is not possible for us to remedy: besides, they are still so young—Elizabeth is not sixteen.'

'It is precisely at that age young girls desire to appear to the greatest advantage: Elizabeth is taller than I am; Minette is of my height; and both have the air of being full grown.'

'Well then, dear Augusta, do as you will; I should not be sorry myself to see them a little adorned.'

My wife and my two daughters soon became quite busy in preparing for this grand day. As for me and my son, our dress underwent few alterations, and was ready in four minutes; but the attire of the ladies takes up more time. All the presses were opened and tumbled out. I had never observed my wife to be troubled with the cares of the toilet, and still less my daughters; I was even convinced that they were indifferent about it, at least the tender, serious Elizabeth.—I was mistaken; she showed almost as much eagerness as her sister. All the wardrobe was exposed upon the backs of chairs; all the ribbons in the house were collected upon a table; the muslin curtains of the drawing-room, which were to make their appearance in the city, God knows under what form! were taken down. There was not a soul unemployed down to little Annette, who was not to be one of the party, yet who, nevertheless, was giving her opinion, and trying the ribbons, one after another, upon her head, and about her neck. Then began among the four such a clatter as I had never heard in my life, every one telling her opinion at the same time; so that I could hardly hear Charles, who was at his greek lesson in the archaiology of Frederic. By chance we happened to be exactly at the chapter on the vestments of the greeks, and I made my son repeat.

'Lewis, what was the tunic called?'

'*Chiton*: it was without sleeves, and reached below the knee.'

'To the feet, Lewis,' said Minette, who was half listening, and fitting on a robe.

'No, miss; at most but to the calf of the leg.'

'Fie!' cried she; 'that would be frightful: the dress is worn very long at present.'

'She is talking of the robe she is to wear on Thursday to go to town in,' said Charles.

'Oh! if that be it, I know nothing about it!' replied Lewis.

'Do not interrupt us any more.'—I repeated—'what was the robe called, Charles?'

'*Stole*: it descended to the feet.'

Mina, turning about instantly, cried—'oh! I knew very well it was down to the feet, and very long behind!'

'And what was worn over all, Lewis?'

'The cloak which was called *Imation*.'

'Of what color were those worn by the orators?

'Red.'

'White would please me better,' said my wife; 'red would appear too village-like.'

All this made such a comical *imbroglio*, that I really thought my wife and daughters were grown crazy.

'Red,' said I with vivacity: 'I beg of you to mind your rags, and not to disturb our lesson.'

'And that is what I am doing, my dear; but do you also let us choose our colors: men know nothing about it. Only look, I beseech you, how ugly a red cloak would appear upon violet!' and she put a red ribbon upon a violet robe. 'Do you not see it yourself? let us alone, we understand these matters better than you.'

'But, my love, I was speaking of the cloak worn by greek orators, and not at all of yours. I entreat you, Augusta, dress out your daughters if you will, but let me instruct my boys.'

At last they agreed about the color; but there were still discussions enough as to the form of the robes. They even did me the honor to ask me some particulars concerning the dress of the bookseller's nieces. I took a moment to reflect: the whole four fixed their eyes on me with impatience.

'I must,' said I at length, 'acknowledge to you, my dear friends, that I did not give much attention to it; I recollect only that one of them wore a pair of horns on her head in the way Moses is painted——stop, I will show you the plate; you can take the model—here it is, precisely the same thing.'

'Mamma, mamma,' said Mina, 'I see mrs. Schink going by; I will run after her quick, and tell you exactly the form of her robe.'

'Wait for me,' cried Elizabeth, 'I will go with you—four eyes are better than two.'

'Dear me, Elizabeth too,' thought I, 'the sensible Elizabeth!'

'Wait, children,' said my wife, 'I will go myself likewise: I would not understand any part of your description.'

I shook my head on seeing them run all three, and next morning I made Charles read the satire of Juvenal upon the frivolity of women; but Augusta and her girls were cutting and sewing with so much activity, and talking with so much volubility, that the finest passages of the satire were lost, even when I repeated them with my deep voice.

Every day following, as soon as the elegant mrs. Schink was perceived, the one and the other set off to gaze at her, and my wife just like my daughters. Our parlor resembled that of a court taylor: the tables and chairs were covered with scraps of stuff; I did not hear a word but about body and sleeves, and all the colors in the rainbow. My dictionaries were all employed to press ribbons or gauze, and the moment I wanted to take one, three voices opened upon me to beg me to derange nothing.

In fine, all was ready. Two days before the journey, robes, head-dresses, and all were tried on, and I was sent for to judge of the effect. Elizabeth and Mina were dressed out, and glowing with pleasure like two blooming rose buds.

I examined them, and shook my head with an air of inquietude.

'Well now, my dear girls,' said I to them, 'are you dressed very exactly like the intendant's wife?'

'Yes, papa,' answered Minette.

But my wife said nothing, which appeared a little suspicious. I looked at them again from head to foot, and said to them—'for my part, my dear friends, I find you look very well—I am quite contented, and the judge has nothing to reprehend; but, I know not why, Minette with her little corsican bonnet, and Eliza with her straw one, which are heavy enough by the bye, appear less constrained, lighter, more at their ease, than with this packet of gauze upon their head, which does not perhaps weigh an ounce, and which they labor under as if it weighed an hundred.'

'Do you not think, father,' observed Charles, 'that Minette resembles the Atlas of Herodotus, supporting the world on his shoulders!'

'That is the very thing, my son—you have expressed what I wanted to say: they look to be as much loaden and occupied with what is upon their heads, as if they were bearing the world.'

Tears came in Mina's eyes.

'My sisters,' said Lewis, 'hold themselves as straight as if they were going to dance the tight rope.'

'Yes,' replied little Wilhelm, laughing, 'Minette balances her head as if she had a straw upon her nose.'

'Do not weep, Mina,' cried the sage Annette: 'but it is true enough that this cap is so droll, and gives you such a comical look, that I cannot keep myself from laughing when I look at you; and especially this point that covers your ear,' said she, taking hold of an ornament which hung on one side.

Minette drew her head back, and repulsed her little sister with an angry look. My wife appeared displeased, and went over to Minette, to arange her head-dress.

'I am sorry, Mina,' said she, 'this point gave you pleasure; but I believe your father and sister are right: it is too ridiculous—it must be taken off.'

She turned it under, and I overheard her murmuring against this *fatal journey*.

Lewis whispered in my ear—'Eliza balances her head under her cap too; but she must not be told of it.'

Nobody had the heart to afflict this excellent girl, and all the sarcasms fell upon Mina: but Elizabeth took her share of it to herself; she seemed even to suffer more, and, quite softly took off her cap.

'I would willingly give,' said I, 'one of my rare ducats, and that is I believe as much as those things upon your heads are worth—well now, I would give it freely that you might make up your minds to lay them aside, and put on your every day bonnets, which become you so well. You will see that, with all your finery, it will fall out as it did to Annette the day she stood godmother, and that she would have herself frizzed. Do you remember how

ridiculous she appeared? Minette, you were the first to laugh and make game of her.'

The two sisters were still a little in the dumps. Both of them advanced, and they embraced each other without saying a word.

'Come, girls,' said my wife, 'your father is right, put on your corsican bonnets, they will become you much better; and as they would not suit with the rest of your dress, if you believe me, you will wear your white sunday frocks. I have also seen the intendant's wife this morning: she had, besides a little I know not what, a little blue vest, which she wore over the rest; and for that we have neither the silk nor the pattern.'

'Dear Augusta,' said I, 'you are perfectly right: with all your trouble, all would seem awkward; you do not even know the names of what you want: for my part, what I can tell you is, that uncle Frederic's nieces had quite another appearance: perhaps, also, that proceeds from your not being accustomed to such a dress. I should be very much embarrassed myself were I obliged to put on a cuirass, or merely a sword.'

This cruel journey was heard on every side. The mother and daughters did not well know what to resolve upon. Elizabeth and Mina had tears in their eyes for their fruitless pains, and because their little ornaments were not fit to appear in.

'Oh my children!' cryed I, taking them in my arms, 'your hearts are still less formed for the world than your robes! and I assure you that in the city you will find much more difference between your minds and those of its inhabitants, than between your dress and theirs; and I thank heaven for it. But since this journey must be made, appear what you are—two good, plain, little country girls, two beloved daughters of an honest village minister.

Elizabeth ran to their chamber, and, in less than five minutes, returned in her usual dress, and more lovely

than an angel: an air of sweet satisfaction and content animated her beautiful features.

'See how I wish to go, father!' said she: 'if they do not find me handsome enough, at least they will not find me ridiculous.'

'I will not answer for it, Eliza: but at least you will not find yourself ridiculous in your own eyes; and that is a great deal: and then, besides, it is but for one day.'

Mina was still dressed out. At last, with a look between laughter and tears, she tore off her fine cap, and, squeezing it very hard between her two hands, repeated the last words of Socrates: 'Crito, thou owest a cock to Æsculapius. *The sacrifice is consummated:*' and she laid her crumpled cap on the table.

Her brother Charles grew seriously angry.

'I beg of you, Mina,' said he to her, 'do not turn the finest saying in the world into ridicule.'

'Into ridicule?' cried she, 'heaven preserve me from it! Socrates drank hemlock—I destroy my cap; the gods alone know which was the most painful: the death of my cap will not be handed down to posterity.'

'*Crito*,' cried I, '*sacrifice a cock to Æsculapius*, for my Minette is cured:' and I pressed the amiable little thing to my heart.

My wife and Elizabeth sat themselves tranquilly down to their knitting and to their spining-wheel. Mina laughed and jested upon the mighty labor of the preceding days, and their fine toilet. Elizabeth pretended that it was to disguise her vexation.

'Not at all,' said she, casting a look at her brother: '*I have passed the Rubicon*, and all is equal to me. I will put on my little corsican bonnet, and if any body

make game of me, I will return it so well, that they will soon be obliged to hold their tongue.'

My little Minette was right: her gaiety won us all; we laughed a good deal. They laid by the new robes, made up the curtains anew, put some additional ribbons on the little bonnets, and were entirely consoled when they heard mrs. Schink say, as she passed by the window, that buff was no longer in fashion, which was the very color of Elizabeth's new jacket.

CHAP. XIX.

The city.

Uncle Frederic's carriage was sent for us on the appointed day. With the exception of Mina, we were all sad enough at quitting our simple abode, even for so short a time. My daughters were very neatly dressed in white linen frocks, ornamented with ribbons. My wife was, like me, in black. There was no end to the questions with which I was teased about the fine apartments, the handsome furniture, and the elegance of the bookseller's family; and whenever they spoke of his sister and nieces, they would cast a dejected look upon one another's dress. Minette alone laughed, and forced us all to laugh: even the learned Charles himself, who did not readily forgive her making free with the philosophers, could not avoid smiling when she parodied the discourse of Diogenes.

'I am poor,' said she: 'instead of a gauze turban, I have a straw bonnet; instead of a silk robe, I have a linen frock. But I oppose fortitude to misfortune—to the manners of the city, those of a simple country girl—and reason, to vanity.'

Uncle Frederic received us with the most cordial friendship. When we came he was alone, and I led him to a window, where I gave him a short account of what had occurred in my house respecting my daughter's dress.

'Good!' cried he, with a smile of approbation—'they are very well; it is just what I wished; I should not have been satisfied were they to appear otherwise: it is as it ought, and, I promise you, they will have reason to be pleased with it.'

He returned to my children, and caressed them with so much familiarity, that they became quite at their ease. He gave Charles some books of ancient history, ornamented with very fine cuts; showed and explained to my wife and daughters the more modern engravings that decorated the room in which we were, led them into an apartment, the magnificence of which surprised them a great deal, and into the dining room, where the cloth was already laid; he pointed out the seats intended for them, near his own, and explained the use of the different articles he supposed they were unacquainted with: then he brought us back to the drawing-room, in which we found the youngest of his nieces most extravagantly dressed.

My daughters saluted her rather awkwardly. It appeared to me that uncle Frederic cast a look of disapprobation upon his niece's attire, though he did not express it by words. After a few minutes, he proposed a little party at questions and commands; and my daughters, aided by his instructions, soon became as sprightly and alert as the bookseller's neice herself. Mina resumed all her natural cheerfulness, and soon appeared as much at home as if she were at Eizebach. Another of the nieces came in at the moment the play was going on with the greatest liveliness. She sat down immediately, and join-

ed in it, as did the two eldest, who came in one after another in like manner. I guessed that uncle Frederic had contrived all this on purpose, that the little villagers might not be discouraged, and to familiarize them by degrees; and I thanked him for it in my heart. At length his sister, a tall woman, of a cold formal deportment, entered the room; and her brother presented my family, saying—'sister, you are already acquainted with my good friend Bomarede; but I have now the pleasure of introducing you to his wife and children, who are every way deserving your esteem.'

She complimented us politely; yet I could perceive something like a disdainful smile dwell upon her countenance; and her four daughters, who, in presence of their uncle, were so well bred, would, the moment he turned his eyes, begin to whisper, stare at my daughters, and then look at one another, and make signs. But uncle Frederic observed them attentively, and did not abandon his two young friends, whom he made to sit down on each side of him. In a short time the company was increased by some gentlemen, who saluted uncle Frederic as they came in, which he returned, mentioning each by name, and engaged in a little conversation, into which he gradually led my daughters; while his sister chatted with my wife, and told her also the names of the greater part of the new comers.

A circle was now formed, and the conversation took another turn, which was far less agreeable to us, and obliged my wife and daughters to silence. There was nothing spoken of but what was absolutely unknown to them—assemblies, plays, *redoutes*, masquerades, &c. which as they did not know so much as the names, was quite an unintelligible language. There was something about literature also; but we were still at as great a loss as ever; it was all concerning the new novel, or the dramatic entertainment of the evening before. The muses' almanac was criticised from beginning to end. My children knew pretty well who the muses were, but had not the least idea of their almanac; nor could they comprehend any thing of what was said. Uncle Frederic might, I

thought, have given another turn to the conversation; but he seemed, on the contrary, to encourage it: he would only say to my daughters, smiling and caressing them—'it is a sad thing, my dear little friends, not to know all that!'—and the dear little friends were still more abashed and disconcerted.

At last they began to talk of music, and I recovered myself. My Augusta, my Elizabeth, and my Charles could converse on that subject too. The four nieces played and criticised in turn. My wife made a sign to Eliza to join in the conversation. I wished her to do so myself; but soon found that it was impossible, and that even upon that subject their language was not such as she could understand. They drew comparisons between the french and italian music; they spoke of *maniere*, of *musica*, *amorosa*, *pittoresque*, *sublime*, *buffa*, &c. &c.—They criticised Grann, Hasse, Sebastian, and Emanuel Bach; Gretri, Gluck, and Piccini were severally the objects of scientific argument, and raised to the clouds, or lowered to the earth. Elizabeth, who did not know one of them, had not a word to say; and that hurt me exceedingly. In fine, to complete our mortification they began to speak french.

But what astonished me was, that uncle Frederic, who was still seated between my two daughters, while he paid them every attention, appeared to take a pleasure in their embarrassment, and repeated from time to time—'oh, how vexatious it is not to comprehend any thing of what is said!'

I saw the poor children blush with shame, and my wife with anger. I cannot say I was angry with my friend, but I was surprised, and suffered for my poor girls: every thing, even their simple dress gave me pain.

It was the time that large swelling pockets were in fashion: the four young ladies had enormous ones, and my poor daughters had none at all. Their robes, fitted naturally to the waist, flowed in negligent folds, and did not disfigure the fair proportions of nature, which had

always pleased me the more, as it reminded me of the dress worn by the grecian women. But their slender figure made a poor appearance beside the large pockets of the town ladies; and it was this defect in their dress especially, that seemed to attract so much notice.

'Ah!' thought I, 'I would gladly give one of my rare ducats that my daughters had pockets!'—and I felt that it was hard to endure poverty.

'Very well, niece!' said uncle Frederic in german as one of them rose up, after playing a very difficult piece—'that music is really admirable! but I am inclined to think, however, that music in general has lost its primitive character: it may perhaps flatter the ear more, but it no longer affects the soul. What do you say, my dear Wahlen?' said he, addressing himself to a young man of a very pleasing appearance.

The other smiled, and replied—'you know already, sir, that my taste is fixed as to that point. I know not if it be correct; but I have on my side the opinion of several celebrated musicians: Tartini thinks as I do. And the plain chant I have heard in a roman chapel, affected me in the highest degree, although it was in unison, and of a very simple kind: difficulties astonish, but do not move me.'

'And if what is related of the music of the Greeks be true,' said Frederic—'what was the man's name,' interrupted he, turning to Elizabeth, 'who reconciled the Spartans by the power of his music?'

'Terpander,' replied she.

'The same thing is related of Solon,' cried Charles, who found himself in his element when the ancients were once mentioned.

Young Wahlen looked at Elizabeth, then at my son, then again at Elizabeth, and observed to her that the same thing was recounted of the effects of the ancient french music. 'I do not recollect what author,' said he,

'mentions the instance of a chevalier whom one strain of melody turned mad, and another restored to reason.'

'That happened also at Olympius,' observed Eliza, 'oh, in Plutarch there are miracles recorded that have been performed by music!'

'Or that are pretended to have been performed by it, Eliza,' said Minette: 'for if those miracles were true, would the antient writers say so much against music?'

'And what is it they say, my little Minette?' demanded uncle Frederic.

'They say that it is a sweet poison which destroys the tone of the mind, enervates the heart, and leads to every vice.'

'Incredible!—do they really say that? do you hear, Wahlen, the description they give of music?'

'Oh! do not believe what she tells you!' replied Elizabeth. 'It is not of music in general they speak, it is of the ionian mode, which was just invented. It is true *that* music excited the passions, and troubled the soul, instead of tranquillizing it.'

'It seems to me,' remarked Frederic, 'that those effects are also produced by the modern music.'

'Modern!' cried Elizabeth, with an innocent look; 'what kind of music is that?'

'The music of the present times. Modern comes from mode, fashion, that which is in fashion: you are not in the fashion, my dear child; you do not even know what it is.'

She blushed, and the nieces smiled. The arguments of my daughters on this subject need not seem at all extraordinary; this little dispute had often been renewed at home. Mina, as I have already noticed, could never learn music; she therefore found fault with it on all occasions, and whenever she found any passage in the ancients against music, would triumphantly cry out—

'well, now you see!' and would deny all its prodigies. Charles, who was wonderfully orthodox, upon every thing advanced by the ancients, kept, on his side, a register of all the places where those prodigies were cited, to oppose them to the incredulity of his sister; and uncle Frederic had been present at one of these debates.

The nieces were now silent, as my daughters had previously been: however, to have something to say, they wanted to defend the new system of music; but their uncle interrupted them, and said to Mina—'you are not fond then of the miracles of music?'

'Oh, pardon me!' cried she; 'if I wished to learn music, it should certainly be that kind; I would then go all over the globe, reconciling mankind, and restoring harmony every where. But my brother, whom you see there, ah! were you to hear him play in his serious, majestic manner! it is always the dorian; as for me, I like nothing but lively tunes. Elizabeth cares only for the lydian.'

'And which is that?' said uncle Frederic.

'It is that which penetrates to the bottom of the heart, and which fills the eyes with tears. But is it not silly to shed tears for what should only give us pleasure? dear me! one has surely occasion enough to weep without looking for more! for instance, Eliza,' cried she, bursting into a laugh, 'when the cup of hemlock was to be taken off yesterday.'

'Mina, I beseech you hold your tongue!' cried Elizabeth, gently.

'In the name of wonder,' exclaimed Frederic, 'what can this cup of hemlock mean?'

'Mina, I conjure you!' repeated Elizabeth, in a supplicating tone.

'Do not be afraid, Eliza,' replied Minette, 'I will not betray our secret, or rather my secret; for you had

put on your conical bonnet a long time, while I was still balancing my head in equilibrium.'

Uncle Frederic then recollected what I had told him on our arrival, and pressed Mina to explain what she meant; in fine, she was obliged to comply, and relate the history of the fine dress and bonnets.

'You laid them all aside then courageously?' said he.

'We did, and I thank heaven for it, now that I have seen those young ladies: it was so different! oh, I am sure our fashionable dress would have made them laugh all day long.'

She then gave them such a pleasant description both of what had passed on this subject, and how their little brother had told them they looked as if they were balancing a straw upon their nose, that she set every body a laughing, and was universally caressed.

'And it was to me,' said she, 'that all that was directed, although Eliza had her gauze castle upon her head too. Oh, my Eliza!' cried she to her with tenderness, 'although I could not help weeping at my own vexation, I suffered infinitely more when any one looked at you! it was quite natural to make game of me; but of you, Eliza—' and Elizabeth affected, caressed her tenderly.

Whether it were to second their uncle's plan, or that they themselves were captivated by the mild and unaffected amiability of my girls, the four nieces, who till now had preserved such a cool disdainful air, came over successively, and chatted with them in a friendly manner.

Mr. Wahlen begged Elizabeth to sit down to the piano. She excused herself, saying that she did not read well, and that she scarcely knew any thing by heart.

'Play out of your head,' said her mother.

Wahlen took her hand, and led her to the instrument. She sat down, and preluded with an uncertain, trembling hand. The nieces and some of the gentlemen were standing about her; Frederic, on some pretext, drew them all to the other end of the room.

Wahlen alone remained at the piano, turning over a music-book. When she had finished the antiquated air she was playing, he took a chair, sat down beside her, and played himself a very fine piece he had just found. They began immediately after to speak of music, and turn over the book together. While she chatted, Elizabeth was striking accords; insensibly the rich tone of the instrument tempted her to play some fantasies, as the conversation was pretty loud between the rest of the young people. Wahlen himself perceiving that she was entering into the spirit of it, rose up as if to rejoin the company; but he remained behind her chair, and his whole soul seemed wrapped in attention.

Indeed she surpassed herself. I have never heard any thing more harmonious and delightful: her hand seemed to obey the impulse of her heart. Rapture and admiration were depicted in every countenance; the conversation sunk into a whisper, and soon died away altogether; and it was this silence that drew Elizabeth out of her musical inspiration, and advertised her there were listeners. She stopped on a sudden, and rose up exceedingly confused, lisping something about the goodness of the instrument.

The whole company, not excepting even the young ladies of the house, put her modesty to a severe trial, by the encomiums they heaped on her; while she, blushing, attributed all to her mother, who, in fact, enjoyed it much more than herself, and I much more than either. Wahlen alone said not a word; he seemed absorbed in thought, and on the point of becoming another example of the miracles of music. At length he awakened from his reverie, and approaching her, began to speak to her

in a low voice. My son then went to the piano, and touched some fine *impromptus* in the *dorian mood*.

'Mind,' cried Minette, 'there is the Lacedemonian march! listen to the heroes' hymn to battle! now you hear the gods—the very harmony of Olympus!'

'And this,' said Charles, playing a sprightly allemand —'ah! that indeed, that is Minette's march!'

A servant came to announce that dinner was ready, and the good uncle taking my daughters by the hand, made them sit down beside him. He seized every occasion to place them in an advantageous light, and in speaking of the english natural history he had lent them, found means to discover that they knew that language tolerably well. They talked of natural history with intelligence and ease, made several judicious comparisons between that work and the ancient authors who had treated of the same science.

I thought the bookseller's sister and her daughters began to exhibit some symptoms of discontent, and conceive that there was more attention paid to the little villagers than was necessary. One of the young ladies never took her eyes off mr. Wahlen, who was conversing with Elizabeth in an animated manner, but in a low voice, and neither heard nor saw any thing else.

We had in company a man of learning and some celebrity, and Frederic had contrived to place Charles next to him. This gentleman attacked the young man upon his studies and the classics. My son stood his ground most gallantly, and displayed a share of erudition that astonished the professor: certainly the pleasure of conversing with a celebrated character electrified him; for never did I see him possessed of so much eloquence and vivacity before.

Mina was extremely agreeable: she replied with promptitude, and even wittily, to every thing that was addressed to her. Her mein was graceful and easy: she

admired without appearing astonished, enquired the names of the objects that were unknown to her, and was the first to laugh at her own ignorance. She was, at the same time, very gay, and politely reserved: in fine, one would have said that she had been brought up in the world, and received the most brilliant education. Elizabeth was much more intimidated: she only spoke to the persons who sat next her, and then quite low; she blushed when any one spoke to her, and even committed several mistakes she would not have done at home.

Frederic seeing a cloud upon the brow of his nieces, brought back the conversation to the arts and amusements and modern literature. My children had no idea of the books or subjects of which they spoke; but this time at least Minette did not remain mute: she demanded an explanation of the plays, and a description of the theatres.

'Why do you wish to know all that, Minette!' asked Frederic.

'To converse with you whenever I see you,' replied she; 'and to know how you amuse yourself when I shall not.'

When dinner was over she joined the nieces, with whom she was become quite familiar. They went out together to go to their apartment, where they exhibited all their hats, all their caps and bonnets, and gave Mina a lesson of taste, which she comprehended without difficulty: on her return, I remarked that her hair, and the knots of ribbons on her bonnet, were arranged quite differently.

That day did not appear more than five minutes to my girls and Charles; my wife herself was applauded on her own account. After dinner Frederic led her to the piano, and her style of playing was highly admired, especially by young Wahlen, who told the mother all he had not told the daughter, and complimented her particularly on the perfect education of her children.

At last we got up again into Frederic's carriage, al-

most enchanted with the agreeable day we had spent. Elizabeth and my wife praised Wahlen; Charles his professor; Minette every body, even the nieces; and all four the excellent uncle Frederic. Nor were the little gentry we had left at home silent on our arrival, but the panegyric was re-echoed by my three youngest; for he had taken care to put a large paper of sweetmeats into the carriage for them: so that all the family was equally well pleased with this little excursion.

CHAP. XX.

The consequences.

Next morning, the first thing Mina did, was to look for her torn cap, which she examined on every side, singing and repeating—'I know very well how I will do it!'

Her mother entered and went over to her; the little slut told her what she was going to do, pushed the spinning-wheel into a corner, threw the knitting into a drawer, and set to work with her scraps. Elizabeth came in next; Mina recommenced her story, and the mother and daughters began a very serious conference. Some minutes afterward, hearing no noise, I turned about, and beheld Elizabeth with an apron about her shoulders, and her hair loose, between her mother and sister, who were putting it in papers. When it was dressed in taste, her sister put the cap on her head, and was more than an hour arranging it, without Eliza once complaining of being out of patience.

Minette,' although the youngest, was the soul of this grand affair: she had experience on her side, having seen and touched every item of the nieces' wardrobe, and examined their head-dress very particularly. My wife also had observed all with great attention; but as she had only seen what the young ladies wore, she submitted to the decisions of Minette with docility. As for Elizabeth, she allowed that she did not remark the young ladies very minutely; but to counterbalance that, she knew to a nicety how the elegant Wahlen was dressed, and so she was charged with altering her brother's clothes.

On Sunday it was her turn to go to church. I saw her make her appearance that morning in great style: her hair fell in negligent curls, and the cap trimmed by Minette, did not ill resemble that of the nieces, notwithstanding the criticisms of Charles, who wanted to prove mathematically that it was some lines higher. Two tolerably bulky pockets projected on each hip. Her bosom was half uncovered, Minette not being able to prevail on her to have it entirely so, and a large *bouquet* of narcissus was placed on one side. Her sister followed her step by step all the morning—walked round her—fastened a pin—smoothed a fold—and gave particular attention to the sleeves, which puffed out below, and were called *poufpoufnes*. Yet poor Elizabeth was quite ashamed of her attire, and reddened like scarlet when I looked at her. My wife admired her daughter with a mother's eyes, and for my part, I could not help being somewhat proud of her beauty, and regarding her with pleasure; but I felt, nevertheless, a sort of inquietude, and I was ill at ease.

'I fear,' said I, 'that this will appear too remarkable at church, and I would prefer seeing her dressed as usual,'

'Why now,' cried Augusta and Mina all at once, 'she is very well as she is,'

'If,' observed I, 'I had taken another text; but I am

to preach to-day upon the wicked rich man and poor Lazarus: all the psrish knows I am poor, and yet they will see my daughter dressed as if I were rich.'

'But, love,' cried Augusta, 'why will you have people think of her on account of Lazarus? are not the daughter's of a minister as good as a bookseller's nieces? have they not a right to dress as well?'

'No, my dear friend, when the bookseller is rich, and the minister poor. Had you told me of it yesterday I might have chosen another subject. There is a long passage in my sermon precisely against luxury in dress: it will be thought that I am preaching against my poor Elizabeth, and that will give me pain.'

I was in hopes that my wife, who entertained the greatest respect for my sermons, would range herself on my side; but I was mistaken: every body has their weak side, and that of Augusta was her daughters, and their beauty. She was silent, however, for an instant; but, after casting a look at Elizabeth, she said to me, hesitating a little—'if you can remember one of your last year's sermons—that upon false shame, for instance, was very fine.'

'That would be still worse, my dear; for in the first part I declaim vehemently against people in poor circumstances who wish to pass for rich, and strive to do more than they are able: that would point directly at Elizabeth.'

'Well then,' cried my wife a little impatiently, 'preach the sermon against the fear of apparitions: that will have nothing to do with her.'

'No, that is true; but is it not much easier for Eliza to change her robe than me my sermon? besides, I have not time at present; you know I have already been asked for the psalm.'

At that very moment the bell began to ring.

'And now you perceive too,' said my wife, 'that Elizabeth has not time to change her dress: let her go just as she is then, it becomes her so well.'

I thought so myself, and could not help regarding her with complacence.

'Well, she may go,' cried I at last: 'however, I wish positively——' and I whispered my wife in the ear.

The modest Eliza understood me, and blushing, raised her neckhandkerchief, and we set out to church together, she, myself, and Charles. When the poor thing was no longer supported by her mother and sister, and that she found herself beside me in my clerical gown, she blushed still deeper, and her embarrassment redoubled at every person we met.

At church I perceived that every one had their eyes fixed upon her. She was so confused, and excited my pity to such a degree, that I resolved to soften the parts of my sermon that were most likely to draw the attention of the congregation to the poor girl; but the recollection of my city sermon, which alone made me shudder from head to foot, came into my thoughts.

'What,' exclaimed I to myself, 'compound with the truth! shall that which was true yesterday not be so to-day because it concerns me? no, no, I will not alter the smallest particle of that holy truth of which I am the minister, and more especially when it relates to my own child. Blush then, my daughter, since thou hast exposed thyself to blush! it is yet, thank heaven, only a weakness; but thy father would have to blush for a crime, were he to flatter that weakness instead of striving to eradicate the seeds of vanity and frivolity that are striking root in thy young heart: no, although my Augusta herself was present, I would declaim this passage of my discourse.'—And I laid my finger upon a page in which I reprimanded mothers who were too indulgent and prepossessed in favor of their children.

If the reader could form an idea of the tenderness I felt

for my Elizabeth, he would admire my fortitude, and the sacrifice I offered to the truth. While I was going up into the pulpit, I compared myself to Brutus, ascending the tribune to pronounce sentence upon his guilty sons. I could not refrain from looking at Elizabeth continually: she held her head inclined over her prayer book.

'Poor victim!' thought I, 'lay thy head patiently upon the block; I will not spare thee—I will not disguise the truth!'

I kept my word; I was particularly eloquent upon every thing that could be applied to my daughter. All eyes were turned toward her, and she seemed still more downcast; indeed she looked as if she were doing penance. I had not preached for several years with so much pathos; my eyes swam in tears; but when I turned to the side where my poor child seemed undergoing the punishment of a sinner, I was ready to sob, and I actually saw several women crying. I ended by this sentence, taken from the apology of Socrates—'God has given life to man merely to do good: I have told you the truth, whatever it may have cost my heart; and I leave you at present to pass what judgment you please upon me.'

When I gave out the verse for the last chant, I was struck with the words—'as a father hath compassion on his children, God will have compassion on him;' they penetrated my soul. 'As a father hath compassion on his children!' and I—I had unmercifully driven my child to despair. In pronouncing this verse my lips quivered—my soul was oppressed—I feared I had gone too far with my poor Eliza, who now appeared perfectly innocent, and I returned to the house sorrowful and dejected.

Elizabeth was already come home. I expected to find her in tears; to my great surprise, she appeared more cheerful than before the sermon. Neither she nor my son said a single word to me that related to it. I went into the adjoining chamber to take off my gown, and as soon as I was gone out, my wife asked Charles upon what I had preached.

'I confess,' answered he, 'I do not well know the first part, my attention was distracted by Eliza's cap; but the conclusion was sublime: he spoke of the obligation to be just and sincere in all circumstances, were it even against one's self. Every body was affected, and he himself wept.'

'For my part,' cried Elizabeth, 'I have paid less attention to papa than usual; because I was so uneasy in my seat: these large pockets encumber me terribly; but the sermon was very fine.'

'Ah, my children!' exclaimed I, on hearing what they said, 'your good genius has given you these distractions to save you the affliction you would have suffered from my severity: still you will hear it but too soon; they talk of nothing else now all over the village.'

My supposition was wrong: the whole congregation, as well as Charles and Eliza themselves, had been distracted by the extraordinary finery of the parson's daughter; and when I thought they looked at her to remark the application of my words, it was in fact to admire her beauty. They wept because I wept; and the good people all thought I was preaching on the resurrection.

My vanity was a little hurt that the sacrifice I had made to truth had not been remarked—I had suffered useless anguish: but the still more excruciating anguish I had endured at Elizabeth's bedside in her infancy, when she was at the point of death in the small pox, and I reflecting upon the venerable widow's five children! she knew nothing of that; she saw not the bitter tears I then shed; and were they not also the tears of a paternal heart? are they not the best and most acceptable sacrifices that are not remarked, that the world is ignorant of, and that are offered up to heaven with a pure intention? have we not a father, a friend, who sees them, who judges them, and knows the value of our tears and fortitude? I observed silence, and rejoiced in my heart that I had been the only one afflicted.

On monday morning my wife begged me to dispense

with the girls' lessons, as they had something important to do in the house. This I discovered was nothing less than to arrange the drawing room curtains, in drapery, like those at the bookseller's, and to make cushions and covers for the wicker chairs, of a mattress and two silk bed quilts. It became necessary likewise to alter their every day robes, to make the straw bonnets smaller, to lengthen the petticoats with furbelows, to widen the sleeves, and, above all, to pass an hour or two before the looking glass.

Every day, when I declared my opinion upon these follies, my wife would reply—'but, my dear, that costs us nothing but a little more trouble, which will make your girls more handy: if these alterations cost money, I would not have made a single one.'

'Ah!' cried I, sighing, 'they will cost us much more than that!—the tranquillity of my children's hearts—their simplicity, and the innocence of their minds, and perhaps the peace of our lives, and money too; for, in fine, my love, it is not for ourselves alone you are doing all that; this furniture, these robes, these pockets, and these sleeves are to be seen. Would to God we had never seen the bookseller!'

'We should, however, see somebody one time or other, my dear: you would not choose to make nuns of your daughters? and if they must know a little of the world, is it not better now than later? once married, and they will think no more of it: and then if they do not appear like other young girls, all the world will make game of them. If uncle Frederic had not been so good to them the other day, all the company would have turned them into ridicule. Have I not seen how the young ladies stared at them?—and that Mr. Wahlen, did he once take his eyes off Eliza? it was only through complaisance for the man of the house that they kept from laughing. My children are my own flesh and blood, and I cannot bear them to be laughed at, though I should be obliged to work every night to

prevent it. As to the change in the furniture, Mrs. Salzberg told me she should accompany her brother when he should come to see us; and you know my dear, that it is but civil to receive her as she is accustomed to be.'

It seemed to me my wife was in the right: however, I was not in the wrong; and I soon perceived that the window-curtains were only the beginning of other changes that were making for the reception of the fine ladies.

'Well, then,' said I one day to my wife, when I was vexed by their perseverance in these alterations, 'take the rare ducats: they were to have contributed to adorn my childrens' mind; but since my friend, the bookseller, has saved us that expense, let them serve to ornament their persons: it will still be for my children.—But I repeat it, Augusta, notwithstanding his generosity, I much fear that the acquaintance of this excellent man and his family will be productive of disagreeable consequences.'

'And if you write your book,' cried she, 'will not that oblige us to have some communication with the world? will it not be necessary to have some acquaintance with booksellers? and where will you find one more friendly or better able to pay you for your works?'

'Your *works!*'—that word tickled my ear and my heart so deliciously, that I had not a word to say: that argument was beyond reply; and I cheerfully consented to all reforms. I became insensibly used to see my children dressed, if not more richly, at least more *a la moderne*. They made wonderful progress in the arts of millinery and mantua-making; and what enchanted me was, that my wig was combed every day instead of once a month, when a drunken barber, who made the circuit of all the clergymens' wigs in the canton, came to dress mine, and cost me enough in money and wine. This economy balanced the new expense of my daughters' powder and pomatum, and some trifle over and above for ribbons.

At the expiration of a month I received the visit of Frederic, accompanied by his friend the mendicant novelist. I was alone, for my wife and daughters were gone to a fair in the neighborhood. My worthy friend took out of his coach a large bundle of books, another of provisions, a hamper of wine, and a large box.—During this time I was in the romancer's arms, who spoke to me with enthusiasm of the sentimental scene that passed between us. He enquired ten times over after my daughters, and spoke with rapture of my eldest, and her melting words—*' oh, do not leave us so !—do not refuse us !—do not punish us !'* &c. They were engraven, he declared in his heart; he was dying with impatience to see that beneficent angel, and clasp her to his bosom.

Since I had read novels, I was become distrustful; this anthusiasm for my daughter looked suspicious, and put me in an ill humor. Without any doubt what Elizabeth had done was very meritorious; but her brothers and sisters had also clasped their little hands, and said as well as she—*" oh, take it, take it !—do not refuse us !"*—and my wife had intended giving him the ducat, and had offered it with her own peculiar grace; yet the novelist spoke of nobody but Elizabeth. It seemed to me that a romance writer should observe every shade better; and I told him so frankly.

" What," cried he, " really the children too, and your wife ? what a family ? what hearts you are blessed with! but, I confess, I beheld only that angel, the charming Elizabeth, and her fine blue eyes beaming with tears, while she took me by the hand, and begged me, with a voice that re-echoes still in my heart—*" do not leave us so ! do not punish us !'*

My ill humor increased; but I did what I could to dissemble it, for fear he would write it in his novel.

Frederic joined us in a few moments, and embraced me most heartly, crying—' my dear friend, I shall never forget as long as I exist all I owe you for the visit you have paid me: it has effected a total change in my house.'

'Alas!' reflected I, 'and in mine too!'

'My nieces,' continued he, 'were every way inclined to become fine ladies, and indulge in all the excesses and follies of fashion My sister, who is a weak mother, far from checking them, as she should have done encouraged them. It was continually dinned in my ears that people should act like others if they did not wish to incur their ridicule. The newest fashion was always the most convenient; the newest book, the best written: the music of the day, the only music worth playing. When I objected to the expense occasioned by this passion for novelty, I passed for being too saving and whimsical, and gained nothing by it. As soon as I saw your interesting family, I conceived the idea of proving to my nieces that it was possible to please without having even the slightest notion of modes or fashions, or ever going out of a village. When I invited you to come to dine with me, and to bring your children, my nieces asked me repeatedly what pleased me so much in the young villagers—'you shall see,' answered I; 'it is not easy to tell you.'—The elegant simplicity of your daughters' dress, the natural grace of their deportment, their artlessness, their total ignorance of a town life, and every thing that is modern; joined to their profound knowledge of ancient literature, their modesty and real information, struck my nieces and every body else in company with admiration. You know how matters went on; but you were unacquainted with my motive. I wanted to display your daughters' talents, and for that purpose began with exposing the frivolity and trifling acquirements of my nieces, as a foil to the good education of your children.

'I made your daughters speak upon subjects rather unusual, and perhaps useless enough in the education of females, but which were more piquing on that very account, and should astonish my nieces the more as they knew not a word about it. I then left them to themselves, and the superiority of Elizabeth's musical talents, and the original sallies of Minette, her amiable gaity, surpassed

my hopes; they obtained universal applause, particularly that of young Wahlen, who is well instructed himself, and an enthusiast of the true beautiful: he was absolutely enchanted with the acquirements, the taste, and graces of your daughters—he talks of nothing else; and my nieces set the highest estimation on his opinion.—'You see, lasses,' said I to them one evening, 'they know neither Wieland, Gœthe, nor Rousseau, nor have they the smallest idea of the world, the *journal des modes*, or of the theatre; yet Elizabeth plays extempore like an angel: she invents her own music, although the only acquaintance she has with Alcestes, Iphigenia and Dido,* is from history. Their dress which is conformable to nature, and according to the finest models, is the reverse of yours; and yet Wahlen, the sensible, elegant Wahlen, whose taste is so delicate and so correct, speaks of these two girls as two divinities. My dear children,' cried I, 'it is because modesty, innocence, a spotless heart, and sound reason will always triumph over the tinsel and jargon of the world, as will the fair forms of nature over the whimsical distortions of fashion. My friend's daughters possess a lustre in themselves—yours is extraneous; they captivate the heart, and you only dazzle.'

'I spoke on this occasion with more energy than I recount it to you, and for once, supported by the example of your charming girls, I succeeded in persuading them. My nieces are much more neat and plain; they have attempted to copy after your daughters as much as the customs of the city would allow. They no longer wear those huge pockets and wide sleeves, which disfigured their shape; they look a hundred times handsomer for it: and I make no doubt but the young ladies of the city will imitate them in turn: what is really beautiful must take, and will last. They have asked me for instructive books: they go out more seldom, are more fond of employment, and have acknowledged to me that they are the happier for it; and it is to you, my valuable friend, it is to your daughters I am indebted for a reform which delights me.'

* Names of celebrated operas.

'Alas!' replied I, 'you will likewise perceive a great deal in my house that has been brought about by that unlucky visit!'

At that moment my wife and family came in. Mina ran into the good uncle's arms, but did not jump as usual, because her pockets encumbered her.

'Ha! I see the reform!' cried Frederic, with a look of dissatisfaction, and he ridiculed her upon her dress, which he told her was gone out of fashion.

The romancer had flown to meet Elizabeth, and embraced her tenderly, which I beheld with an uneasy eye. Frederic approached me, and told me to be perfectly tranquil.

'My friend,' said he, 'is a little eccentric in his head; but his heart is as pure as that of a child: he is thinking of nothing but his work, and of picturing a heroine of romance in a becoming manner. He has long been seeking a model in vain, which, he believes, he has at last found in our Elizabeth; and I can assure you that she pleases him better upon paper than in his arms: Elizabeth herself does not think more innocently of it than he.'

She did not recollect him at first, and drew back a little confused; but when she understood it was the dear mendicant, she advanced, and was the first to embrace him. The children saw him again with pleasure, and each of them came to give him the half of the ginger bread they brought from the fair, saying to him as they did about the ducat—*'oh take it!—do take it!—do not refuse us!'*—and he thought himself in the third heaven.

Uncle Frederic had the large box brought in which he had taken out of the coach.

'Here,' said he, 'is something to assist in the *history of the reformation.*'

It consisted of very pretty, but plain white straw hats, round caps edged with lace, two lilac stuff robes, but fine

and made in a simple charming taste, and especially *without pockets*, and some pieces of pretty ribbons, &c. &c.

The opening of this interesting box interrupted a conversation between my daughters and the novelist, and collected us all about uncle Frederic.

'I wished to lead you a little into the fashion, my dear girls,' said he to them; 'but you have gone before me.'

They embraced him laughing, and went out with their treasure. At the end of half an hour they returned quite happy, particularly Minette, who had tried on every thing already, and jumped with joy, so much the easier, as, upon the uncle's word, she had taken off her big pockets.

Each of the children had their little present also; Charles, with his books, was the happiest of all; and great was the gratitude to uncle Frederic.

CHAP. XXI.

The plot of peas and conjectures.

On the morning following, Elizabeth and Miss dressed themselves in their fine lilac robes and new head-dresses, which held the middle between village simplicity and town elegance, and became them to admiration; they were really very pretty, especially Elizabeth.

Our old servant Mary had been a long time surprised at the change in our furniture and my daughters' dress; but this morning, on seeing them so metamorphosed, her curiosity was wound up to the highest pitch. There had been a thousand conjectures formed in the village already; Mary had been questioned, but could give no information. But now she combined the arrival of the bookseller, and the presents he had brought, and the novelist's eagerness to see Elizabeth: all that shewed clear as day that Elizabeth was going to be married; but to whom? neither the bookseller nor the author seeming young enough.—'She is to be married for all that,' said she, 'and the husband must shew himself one time or other.'

After breakfast the novelist had a mind to contemplate a new situation. He begged Elizabeth to sit down to the piano; she consented, and played divinely. My author was in raptures, and cried out in a poetic transport—'oh, may that sweet, that celestial harmony ever reign in thy bosom, charming Elizabeth! may the graces be thy constant companions! behold this ring!' said he, shewing her a very fine cornelion, representing the three graces, which he had on his finger: 'you should never be separated. Elizabeth, in giving you this ring I dedicate you to the graces!

This present astonished me, and seemed to me to declare something: the innocent Elizabeth herself felt it, and was for refusing; but uncle Frederic cried—'do not be afraid, my child, keep the ring: upon my honor, there will be no other consequence to be apprehended from him than a pretty chapter perhaps in some novel.'

She accepted it blushing. But what was surely much more acceptable to her than the ring, was to hear Frederic mention that young Wahlen was to come on horseback.

'He would have come along with us yesterday,' said he, 'but our author did not choose it: he was afraid it would spoil his situations; and indeed I wished myself

that my dear little girls might be a little prepared in point of dress. But now let him come as soon as he pleases.'

Alas! it was but too true that this intelligence was far from being indifferent to my poor Elizabeth! a flash of pleasure sparkled in her eyes, which sought to meet those of Mina; but she was not there. Elizabeth went out; she wanted to communicate it to somebody.

'Mina,' cried she, 'dear Mina, only listen!—he is coming—he is coming on horseback!'

It is to be presumed that they had talked of him before for Mina comprehended whom she meant in a moment; but old Mary, who had heard it too, was at a great loss, and wanted sadly to know who was this *he* that was coming on horseback.

'However, since he is coming,' said she, 'and that he has a horse, I shall hear and see him the first.'

For this purpose she kept a close watch; and I doubt whether Elizabeth herself was more impatient to see the expected cavalier than good old Mary. In fine, she hears the trot of a horse, and runs to open the gate, and lead the beast to the stable. She saw a handsome young man, elegantly dressed, alight, who gave her a very pretty recompense for the little service she was about to render him. There was no longer any doubt of the fact: this handsome, liberal young gentleman was most assuredly miss Elizabeth's future spouse.

Elizabeth had also listened to the horse's feet, and went as far as the door. As soon as Wahlen perceived her, he ran forward and saluted her, at the same time kissing her hand. The bashful creature blushed: it was the first time in her life she received that mark of respect. Wahlen followed her to the parlor where we were all assembled; and honest Mary seeing them go in together, exclaimed—'aye, it is all quite regular: he

kissed her hand, and she blushed. We shall have a wedding!'

We were all delighted at seeing Wahlen again, especially my wife, who thought him very amiable. She remembered what he had said to her at uncle Frederic's concerning her taste for plain chant, and ran over the whole house to find some leaves of old music, composed by her father for a church hymn, and began to play it as soon as the bustle of salutation had subsided. Nobody seemed to think much of it except Elizabeth and Wahlen, who stood close to each other behind her chair, and began to sing the latin words. Augusta played it three times over; the third time we all joined in a choir, and the concert finished with a *tutti* of laughter, which my wife was not too well pleased with.

Wahlen was respectably attentive to Elizabeth. He reminded her of the fine walks about the parsonage, which she had described to him, and proposed to take one along with her. Mina was called to be of the party: she was assisting her mother in getting dinner ready. Annette was gathering strawberries; Charles and his brothers were studying their latin; the author, the bookseller, and I were profoundly buried in literature: she was then reduced to go to walk alone with Wahlen. But she went no further than the garden: from a sort of instinct, she was loath to show herself to the country folks in all her finery, and along with a young man, without any person of her family.

Wahlen had a soul of fire, and the heart of Elizabeth was tenderly alive; there was not then a vast deal of time necessary to a mutual understanding. From the first instant sympathy had attracted them to each other; and each minute they passed together was a year for their sentiments and acquaintance: they were in unison. They spoke of the superb prospect—of the fineness of the day—of the beauties of nature; then of sensibility—of virtue—of the ills of this life, and the pleasing hopes of futurity; and the more exalted the enthusiasm of their

minds, the closer became the intimacy and attachment of their hearts.

Wahlen beheld, with all the enthusiasm of an ardent and susceptible young man, the innocence and purity of Elizabeth's heart, full of the noblest sentiments: he saw in her eyes, which were bedewed with tears, how much she felt every thing he said; and his eyes moistened also. Often, during this conversation, did he take her hand, and press it to his heart and to his lips; and the innocent girl, from the same impulse, pressed the hand of Wahlen. If in his transport Wahlen had embraced her, Elizabeth would have returned it with the same holy innocence. He only went so far as to press the two hands of the gentle maid to his bosom, exclaiming—'oh my dear Elizabeth!'

Old Mary was plucking peas for dinner in the garden unperceived. She was witness to this tender scene, and her suspicions were turned into certainty; the mystery was explained. Our journey to town—the alterations in our furniture—the finery of my daughters, were all accounted for by Elizabeth's exclamation of—'*he is coming on horseback!*' and the conversation she had just overheard.

We came into the garden at last. Elizabeth went to hide her emotion in the plot of peas, under pretence of helping Mary to gather them; and there began the following dialogue:

Mary. 'You find me here all in tears, miss Eliza!'

Elizabeth. 'And, dear me, what is it for, Mary?'

Mary. 'For you and that young gentleman.'

Elizabeth. Blushing. 'And why for us?'

Mary. 'Ah, miss Eliza! you are so handsome to-day—so handsome! and that young gentleman is so handsome too!' Elizabeth smiled. 'such a handsome couple must have a blessing from God!'

Elizabeth. 'Such a handsome couple! are you foolish, Mary?'

Mary. 'Ah! I know very well what I say! you are to be married, miss Eliza; I see that I am not to know it yet; but nobody shall hear it from my lips, not a soul in the world.'

Elizabeth. 'Really, Mary, you are very extraordinary?' and the young girl felt an emotion which exceeded even what she experienced in conversing with Wahlen, and was caused by the words—'*to be married.*'

Mary. 'Oh miss! indeed I should have no eyes not to see what is clear as day, that you are going to be married to that young gentleman. Did I not see you as I was gathering my peas, how he squeezed your hand, and kissed it, neither more nor less than if you were his wife already? did I not see you both weep, and the handkerchief on your bosom rise and fall like a field of corn on a windy day? did I not hear him call you his dear Elizabeth? I have heard and seen every thing; what is the use of denying it?

Elizabeth. 'Sure, Mary, you are not in your right wits to-day.'

Mary. 'Oh dear young lady! I who have seen you such a little child—I who have carried you so often in my arms, what pleasure shall I have in carrying your children also! nay, do not blush; is it not for that a pretty girl comes into the world, to bring others into the world in her turn? they will be fine children, I am sure; you are both so handsome—a pair of angels! oh, how he gazed upon you with his large sparkling eyes! dear miss Eliza, I love you so dearly! I am weeping for joy at seeing you so happy! I will come here on your wedding-day to throw myself on my knees in this plot of peas, where you are now going to tell me all—will you not? I will beseech the Almighty to shower down his blessings upon you and your husband, and you will obtain them. You are so good and charitable, and he is so handsome and so generous!'

Elizabeth was affected to such a degree, that she could not speak; but she turned away her head, and put her hand over her eyes to hide the tears with which they were filled. Mary then observed the ring on Elizabeth's finger: she snatched her hand and said to her with a menacing gesture——

'Naughty girl! will you deny it still?—is not there the proof?—you know the proverb—

'Damsels when they rings display
'Are thinking on the wedding day.'

Poor Elizabeth, overwhelmed with confusion, protested that the ring was a present from the old stranger. Mary would not believe it, but shook her head, crying—'well deny it if you will: yet for all that, old Mary must know it at last, to get the wedding entertainment ready.'

My daughter could not endure this conversation any longer:—she went out of the dangerous plot of peas, bearing in her deeply wounded heart the seducing image of a happiness she had not hitherto dreamed of. It would have been impossible for her to define what she felt; but her tranquillity was lost beyond recovery. She colored on perceiving Wahlen at a distance, who was walking along with us, and avoided him without knowing why: but it was in vain she fled him; he possessed her troubled heart; she still felt the impression of his lips upon her hand, and exclaimed, looking at the ring—'ah! if it were he who had given it me!'

She could no longer dissimulate to herself that, from the first moment she had beheld him, he had interested her; that this partiality was making dreadful progress: and the poor girl felt herself irrestibly impelled as it were toward an abyss.

The first step a young girl makes towards misfortune, is when she acknowledges to herself that she loves: she soon tells it to him who is dearer to her than herself, and from that moment she is no longer her own

mistress; she will be only what he ordains. The innocent Elizabeth would have perhaps remained long ignorant of the state of her heart, but that old Mary had drawn the veil aside which covered her new-born love. The words *husband*, *wife*, *wedding* re-echoed in her soul, and made her feel at once a sentiment of delight and sadness. She trembled at the least motion Wahlen made to approach her; she blushed when any one looked at her; she thought that every body except Wahlen was going to speak like Mary. At last, remarking that she continued to stay at some distance from us, I called her. She was under the necessity of joining us, and returning to the house when we did; but her serenity had disappeared: she was absent and uneasy. She sat down in a corner, without raising her eyes, or saying a word, rubbing between her fingers a pea blossom, which retraced to her the conversation in the plot where it grew. Wahlen did not leave her long to her reveries; he drew near, and spoke to her with that ease which men know so well how to assume, even when their heart is agitated. This time, at least, he did some good to poor Elizabeth, and calmed her a little. Minette started a pleasantry on Wahlen's taste for the lifeless plain chant, which had, she said, won upon her sister; she mimicked their latin hymn with such a comic gravity, and was so gay, so entertaining, that Elizabeth came to herself entirely: before noon she appeared as usual. Mary was inclined to recommence her persecutions when she was laying the table. Elizabeth chid her, and imposed silence, but without being able to persuade her.

CHAP. XXII.

The declaration.

Mary, seeing she could get nothing out of Elizabeth, resolved to make trial of little Annette. This child was extremely acute, and had a wonderful knack at discovering any thing that was wished to be concealed. When any thing was done without speaking of it, she always knew it before her elder sisters. On this occasion she knew nothing, and did not understand Mary's questions; but she put questions to the old woman in her turn, learned upon what her conjectures were founded; and the servant and the child mutually persuaded each other of their reality. Little Annette was piqued at having guessed nothing of the matter before, and because she was not informed of it; therefore she was determined to find it all out. She put on her little prudent look, and observed every thing narrowly.

At dinner Wahlen was placed between my wife and Elizabeth. She was the only one of my children who had a wine glass before her, because she was the eldest, and that we had but few. Wahlen pledged her once or twice in a laughing way; yet he had, in speaking to her, an air of tenderness and gallantry that little Annette had never noticed in any person before, and her suspicions were confirmed still more.

Resolved to know positively what was the fact, she followed the lovers, step by step, as they returned to the garden after dinner. Augusta and Mina remained behind to clear away the table. The little one, seeing her sister and the fine gentleman take the path to Eliza-

beth's favorite grove, took a turn to enter without being seen, and listen to them. After some time they met her in an alley, holding a nosegay of wild flowers in her hand.

'Give me that pretty nosegay, miss Annette,' said Wahlen.

'No, I will not,' answered the little thing.

'What!' cried Elizabeth, 'you will not give your nosegay to this gentleman?'—and she wanted to take it from her; but Annette put the hand that held the flowers behind her back, and said, in a resolute tone—

'No, no, Eliza, it is for uncle Frederic: I will give this gentleman a much larger and finer one the day he will marry you!' and away she ran.

Poor Elizabeth! the thunder had fallen upon her; she remained under the stroke, stupified, blushing, neither daring to look at Wahlen, nor to draw away the hand which he was pressing tenderly in his. Innocent and ingenuous Elizabeth! thou hadst not the art to disguise thy sentiments, to hide them under an affected gaiety, and the mask of pleasantry; with less of sincerity and with less of love, another young woman in a similar situation would have passed off her embarrassment by a jest, run after her little sister, snatched the nosegay, and given it to Wahlen, laughing, and talking of something else: but Elizabeth could only blush and tremble, and thus unwillingly enable Wahlen to read her artless heart. At first he wished to dissipate the gentle creature's confusion, by jesting upon the expression of the child. He opened his mouth to say something to Elizabeth; but when he beheld her trembling, on the point of fainting, stretching out her hands as if to seek support, he approached to her assistance in a state little short of her own. A mortal paleness had succeeded the flush of crimson—tears trickled from her half-closed eyes; one of her hands hid her face; Wahlen held the other, at the same time that one of his arms encircled the inte-

resting maid. How lovely was she at that moment!—how captivating! the emotion of Elizabeth passed with the rapidity of the electric flame into the soul of Wahlen; and he now felt what he had not acknowledged to himself before—that he had adored her from the first moment he had beheld her.

'Wahlen,' cried she, with the accent of love, notwithstanding her intention to have said it with firmness, 'oh, Wahlen! leave me!'

'No, never, never during life will I leave thee, my Elizabeth! oh never, my angel!'

He drew her to his bosom, and, embracing her with ardor, vowed she should be his wife.

But Elizabeth remained silent and, motionless. She felt too much to give it expression; her eyes, fixed upon the ground, overflowed with tears, of which she seemed insensible; her heaving bosom and the trembling of her hands attested her existence; but the paleness of her cheeks and lips, her silence, her immobility announced the agonizing influence of death. Wahlen was terrified; he seated her gently at the foot of a tree, and on his knees endeavored to revive her.

'Elizabeth, dear Elizabeth!' cried he, 'compose yourself. What can you apprehend from the man who respects you as much as you are beloved? what can have caused the state in which you are? Elizabeth!—in the name of all that is dear—one sign, to decide my fate!'

She made an effort, and put her languid hand to Wahlen's bosom, pushing him gently, as if to remove him.

'I am indeed unfortunate if I comprehend you!' cried he, raising himself in a transport of despair.

'Wahlen!' exclaimed she, in a feeble, trembling voice, 'oh Wahlen! are you unfortunate?'

'Yes, the most unfortunate of men, if you reject me, if you do not receive my vows! Elizabeth, I feel it will kill me!'

'Oh, no, no!' repeated the innocent maid, rising up in the greatest anguish, 'oh, no! rather let me die myself! what should I say? what will you——'

'Say that you love me, Elizabeth.'

'I love!—I love!' cried she, hesitating, and in a low voice.

'Me!—me, my Elizabeth! oh! say it is thy Wahlen! restore me to life!'

She hung her head, then leaned her forehead on his shoulder, and her tears flowed in abundance.

At this moment Mina, who was looking for them, came running. When she saw her sister in such a state, she exclaimed—'good heaven! my dear sister, what ails you? what has happened? what is the matter with her, sir? did she meet with any accident? is she unwell?—yourself too, what a troubled look you have! dear, dear Eliza, tell me the cause of these tears!—tell it me, I beseech thee!'

She sat down along with her, and pressed her affectionately to her bosom.

Elizabeth raised her head, and looking tenderly at Wahlen, precipitated herself again into her sister's arms. 'oh! dear, dear Mina, what can I tell thee! my heart is so full! so exceeding full! if you knew—Annette—Wahlen—oh! tell him not to die!'

Minette stared at her with amazement.—'who? Annette—Wahlen! I do not comprehend you.'

'Oh! I cannot tell you at present,' replied Elizabeth, kissing her neck.

'No!—well then, Wahlen, will you tell me? I have seen Annette this minute, and she is very well. Is it you who are ill, since I must tell you not to die?'

Wahlen was confused; but presently taking his resolution, he said in a firm tone—'Elizabeth, I ask you again, in presence of your sister, will you be mine? I love you, and have loved you from the first moment I beheld you. If you deny me, I shall be the most unhappy of mankind.'

Elizabeth hid her face close to her sister, and replied nothing.

'Say then, Eliza,' cried Minette, raising her tenderly, 'do you love him? but do not mistake; it is not as you and I love each other—it is quite another thing that Wahlen asks you.'

'Oh, I know it well!' said Elizabeth, sighing.

'The most delightful thing in the world,' continued Mina, 'is love, dear Elizabeth, and that is what he wishes of you. Say the truth. He pleased you the day we were in town; and what you told me this morning after gathering the peas——'

Elizabeth closed her mouth with a kiss.

'But speak, then,' cried Mina, as soon as she could speak herself; 'there is no use in all these little affected ways. Come here, Wahlen; let us see if you are as you should be, with your eyes full of tears, and all red and trembling. Oh, how his heart beats!' said she, laying her hand to his coat; 'ah, yes, I see you love her; but you do not know how to—why do you stand there like a term? you must throw yourself on your knees before her, and make her a fine speech.'

Wahlen was standing in reality like a statue: he did not kneel, nor did he pronounce a fine discourse. Mina's expressions appeared to him extremely giddy—he did not know but she meant to turn him into ridicule, and what she said looked like it.

But the innocent pleasantry of Mina had always the

power of calming Elizabeth, who became a little composed, and encouraged by her presence, wished to say, 'yes Wahlen, I love you!'—but his eyes, which met hers, and seemed anxious to read her heart, disconcerted her anew, and she could only blush and be silent.

Mina had spoken in downright earnest. It will be remembered that, on quitting table, the nieces had brought her to their apartment. She not only opened their clothes presses, but the bookcase too, and taking up a volume, read a page that excited her curiosity, and tempted her to accept some sets the young ladies lent her.

That evening, when my daughters retired to their chamber, Mina laid her books upon the table, saying to her sister—'look at these, Eliza; shall we read them together?'

Elizabeth opened them, looked at the titles, and shut them instantly, positively refusing to read a single line; but this amiable girl could never avoid doing something to soften her refusals—she promised secrecy concerning her sister's disobedience, and Mina promised to throw down the book at the first improper word she should perceive. She read, and was enchanted; it was a new world to her, of which she had never formed an idea; she could not quit this dangerous reading.

'Oh, Eliza!' said she, 'no, you have no notion how charming it is! the heroes of Plutarch are nothing in comparison! only imagine they are things that might happen to ourselves, and which will happen to us certainly. There can be no harm then in reading them; we will know at last how to behave, and what we should say and do. I cannot guess why my father would not let us read his; there must surely be some worse than others.'

In this manner she passed the whole night reading, and from time to time awaking Elizabeth, and persecuting her to read along with her; but Elizabeth refused in-

variably, whatever desire she might have had on seeing the raptures of Mina, and the tears she shed.

'The more I read,' said Mina to her, 'the more I am astonished that my father should have forbidden novels; for—are you listening, sister?—it is the history of our heart, and every thing I have read must happen to us one time or other.'

'What a simpleton you are!' replied Elizabeth. 'What do you know about it, since you say it is quite new to you?'

'Oh, yes,' answered Minette, 'it is new, and still it seems to me that I was acquainted with it all before, and that it was only the words I wanted. Listen, Eliza,' continued she, shutting the book, 'I will tell it you—father has not forbidden that.'

The scrupulous Elizabeth insisted that it was the same thing, and would not hear a word; but went to sleep and Mina continued to read.

It will be understood, therefore, that when she surprised Elizabeth and Wahlen in the grove, she soon guessed what was the matter. Her only astonishment was to see him so tranquil, and without making any of the genuflections or long discourses of novel heroes, on which account she was still doubtful of his passion; but her sister appeared to her to be in the true costume. Observing, however, that neither answered her a word, she grew angry.

'In truth,' said she, 'I believe you are making game of me with your stately silence. What would there be in novels if the lovers were like you? speak to one another then, since you love one another; for you love him Elizabeth: if you did not, what would you have been doing there, all in tears, leaning on his shoulder? oh, I told you often enough that it would happen to us one day! I shall have my turn too; but I shall know what to do better than you—I know it all by heart, and to shew you, I will tell you all you have felt since you saw Wahlen at uncle Frederic's. You think of nothing but him—is it not so? he is always before you, whatever you are doing;

your heart is oppressed; you suffer, and that suffering pleases you. This morning, when you heard he was to come, your heart beat as if it would fly away. When you saw him come, it was just as if you were taken up to Olympus; when he took your hand, and kissed it, you felt as if the earth fled from beneath your feet: and when he said—'I love you!—you could have wished to die, and it seemed as if you were only beginning to exist. Is not that it exactly, Eliza?'

Poor Elizabeth, affected by such a true picture of her sentiments, sighed, and abandoned her hand to Wahlen, who covered it with kisses.

'Oh! thou lovest me, Elizabeth!' cried he, throwing himself at her feet, 'yes, thou lovest me, and no power upon earth shall ever separate us!—thou art mine, eternally mine!'

'Ah! that is something like! said Mina; 'now he is beginning, as it is in the book.'

She made a sign to her sister to speak; but Elizabeth perceived not her signs. Wahlen alone, of all the universe, existed in her eyes; she trembled like a leaf agitated by the soft breath of zephyr.

'My Elizabeth,' cried he again, 'oh, say that thou lovest me!'

'Yes, I love you!' whispered she, in a voice so low, that he felt rather than heard it, as she inclined her head toward his.

He kissed her with transport; then rose up, sat down beside her, and throwing his arm round her slender waist, pressed her in silent rapture to his heart. Mina wept for joy, and embraced her sister, when Wahlen exclaimed with solemnity—'oh, Elizabeth, if ever I were capable of deceiving thee—if I cease to love thee as I do at this moment—if I could for an instant afflict thy pure innocent soul, or betray thy confidence, I should be a monster! yes, Elizabeth, thou must, thou wilt be mine, although the whole world opposed it!'

'Oh, dear Wahlen!' replied the artless maid; and then turning to her sister, said—'but, Mina, how shall we—I fear that my father—'

'Ah! very true, my dear,' cried Mina, 'fathers are always very vexatious in these cases;—it is not all to agree together; there is always some obstacle on one side or other. I hope, however, Wahlen, that you are neither a prince, nor count, nor baron, for then—'

'Elizabeth,' resumed Wahlen, with more firmness, I am yours for life—nothing shall separate us; and if you think proper, we will go this very moment, and declare it to your parents—we will confide every thing to your father.'

Elizabeth regarded him tenderly, and then looked at her sister.

'Come,' said she, 'come to my father—come Mina.'

But Mina, with a downcast look, and inquietude depicted in every feature, stopped her.

'Eliza,' cried she, 'dear Eliza, I cannot tell why, but I have an idea that it would not be right.'

She felt that there was some reproach to be made her for this affair, and for having read novels.

'Dear Wahlen,' cried she, clasping her hands, 'in the name of heaven defer it; tell us first, at least, if on your side there be no impediment.'

'There is, I am forced to acknowledge,' said Wahlen, dejectedly, 'my beloved Elizabeth, I am not entirely my own master. I have no fortune, and am dependent on an uncle; but when he shall have seen you, I am sure he will consent to our happiness and the preservation of my life, for it depends on our union.'

Mina turned pale, and shook her head with doubt: in the last novel she had read there was precisely an inflexible uncle.

'Ah! the uncles,' cried she, 'they are the worst of all; it is they who never consent. And what is your uncle? a gentleman who lives upon his estate? a——'

'A Baron Von Wahlen.'

'Mercy upon us, a baron! that would be sufficient to kill my poor father on the spot! Elizabeth, for nothing in the world—oh! he must not hear of it—I beseech thee upon my knees! you would cause his death, be assured of it, and mine also!'

Elizabeth, terrified, promised not to mention it.—And I,' said Mina, 'promise you both eternal fidelity as a sister and a friend; and when there will no longer be any obstacles, we will speak of it to my father; but an uncle, and that uncle a baron, are too many misfortunes at a time.

At that moment hearing our voices in the garden, Mina took Wahlen's arm, and advanced toward us, laughing and singing; but Elizabeth, who knew not how to take so much upon her, went another way to avoid us, and did not appear again until she was a little composed.

Our visitors quitted us soon after to return to town. Elizabeth and Mina retired early to their chamber and there was not the least conversation about the visits we had received.

The apprehensions of Mina, at the word baron were quite natural; my children (and why should I not avow that we set them the example?) had a wonderful respect for titles and the lords of the earth. We knew no other but the count of Rangart, and we judged of them all by him. When he visited his estate, which was always once a year, his farmer made preparations to receive him as if he had been a prince. I was very busy likewise; this arrival was a great event for me, and an occasion to display my knowledge of the human heart to my wife. I made her the finest discourses in the world, to prove that there was nothing easier than to present one's self with a becoming assurance before a great lord; that there was nothing necessary but a

sentiment of one's own dignity; that a great lord was, after all, nothing but a man; that we should not let ourselves be imposed upon by vain titles: that the sure means of obtaining what is our due, was to pretend to more. Indeed, I am still convinced of the truth of this system. I always went to present myself to the count, with the finest projects of loftiness; but as soon as I perceived his splendid decorations of Teutonic Commander —his coat glittering with gold embroidery—his negligent attitude and air of indifference, I was petrified, and remained behind the intendant; nor could I take upon me to speak, or, if I did attempt it, I spoke confusedly. Although the count was very affable with me, I could not overcome my timidity; but when I had taken my leave, I recovered my assurance again; and as I returned home, would compose the finest dialogues imaginable between the count and his pastor. When I found myself in my own house, I would assume airs of grandeur and disdain, and recount to my wife, in an emphatic tone, how he had clapped me on the shoulder, squeezed my hand, and called me his dear pastor.

My children entertained, therefore, from their tenderest infancy a high respect for nobility; and if Elizabeth had known that Wahlen belonged to that class, I am persuaded she would not have conceived an affection for him. But at uncle Frederic's there was less importance attached to it; his great fortune, the respectability of his character, and the style of his house, put him on a level with people of the first distinction. Wahlen was the friend of the family, and he was never called any thing but *my dear Wahlen.* We had, in consequence, remained all ignorant of his quality; but when Minette heard that his uncle was a baron, she lost all hopes, and wished to banish those of her sister also: but Elizabeth was already under the power of the god, who, like death, levels all conditions: whether Wahlen were a plebeian or a nobleman, she was beloved by him, she loved him, and that was every thing to her. She was under some apprehensions, however, respecting this uncle, but none respecting her lover; whereas Mina entertained some. It appear-

ed impossible to her that the daughter of a poor clergyman could ever become a baroness; she strove, therefore, as much as she was able, to disenchant her sister: and when she insisted so strenuously to conceal the affair from me, her principal motive was, that she hoped both the lovers would at length perceive the chimera, and renounce it.

I knew nothing, therefore, of what had passed no more than my wife, who would not hear with any degree of patience of such a premature passion. I remarked a change in the behavior of Elizabeth, but I was far from attributing it to its real cause. Love, if I might dare to say it, had elevated her above the sphere of humanity. One would have said she was of a different nature from other beings, so much did she seem superior to all around her. I saw clearly by her melancholy look, by the sighs that frequently oppressed her heart, and the tears that hung on her eyelids, that there was something wanting to her happiness; but I imagined her thoughts aspired to a better world, and that this appeared nothing to her but an idle dream, an illusion of a few moments. Her affectionte soul had always been attached in a peculiar manner to us, to her sisters, to her brothers, to all she knew, even to the animals reared about our house; but since love had developed all her sensibility, she extended it to all mankind, especially to the poor and the unfortunate, and often expressed herself on that subject with the most moving eloquence.

'She is too good, too perfect for this world,' would her mother and I frequently say to one another.

But we knew not that it was a love of a very terrestrial nature that rendered her so good and so perfect.

CHAP. XXIII.

Our hopes.

Alas! the passion of Elizabeth, which occasioned such a series of torments to us all, was, as well as the alterations in our dress and furniture, a fatal consequence of our journey to the city; and unhappily they were not the only ones.

Our friend Frederic, who had introduced us into this new sphere, did generously all that depended on him to obviate the incidental inconveniences. He made several presents to my two eldest daughters and to Charles: he also found means to make my wife and me accept every thing we might want, and that in the most delicate way: sometimes on pretence of a wager he had contrived to lose, at others on the occasion of a birthday, which often occurred in such a numerous family. They were nothing but trifles for our use, or some provisions that we had been accustomed to dispense with from economy. However, those trifles necessitated other expences which grew into wants unknown before: the harmony of our house, and the love which united us, were not diminished by it; yet I began to conceive inquietudes respecting the future, and for the first time formed a desire of obtaining a better living. It was strongly combated in my breast by the regret I felt at the idea of quitting my good parishioners. Were they not my children too? but I had not the vanity to suppose that I could not be replaced by another equally deserving, and perhaps better able to do them good; whereas I could not do it for my own family, whose wants augmented every day, and who had no other resource but my poor emoluments. Still, having

no protector, I had but little hopes. Frederic was of another opinion.—'I must think about it,' said he; and he thought about it so effectually, that he wrote me word in three days that the dean superintendant of Schwatzhague, being eighty-three years old, and so infirm that he could not at most survive a year longer, he had exerted himself to procure me the reversion, and sent me his carriage, in order that I should take the necessary steps myself. My valuable friend conducted me to the president's, and to the assessor of the consistory's. I met the most gracious reception, and the finest promises; nor could I conceive by what art my friend had obtained such wonderful success in so short a space as three days.

'There is nothing requisite,' said he to me, 'but a little money and a knowledge of mankind. I have lent a sum to the president's nephew, who was in want of it, and has a great deal of interest with his uncle. I borrowed another from one of the assessors, who had a capital to place out at interest; and I have sold books upon credit to the other, who wants to furnish a library. It is all right to a miracle, and you will be a dean without putting me to the expense of one louis.'

These means of obtaining preferment were not entirely to my taste.

'Are you acquainted with any others?' demanded Frederic. 'If any one in the world deserves to be well placed, it is you; and upon that point my conscience is at rest.'

I was not perfectly convinced, but I let him go on as he had begun. He gave a dinner next day to all the members of the consistory. I received the most positive promises from each: at the dessert they drank to the health of the future dean, and I returned home with much hope, but little edification as to the manner, and yet letting every thing proceed. Oh, how weak and inconsistent is man!

When I communicated my hopes and scruples to my

family, there was only Charles who approved the latter: he declared that, for his part he would never take any step to obtain a place. Mina told him he was a madman. I approved his mode of thinking, which proceeded from the rectitude of his principles; and I added, what I really then felt, that I could witness the disappointment of my hopes without any sorrow. Mina was very anxious to know exactly what was the rank of a dean, and seemed to me to hold more to the honor than to the stipend.—When her mother, whose grandfather had filled that dignity, told her what it was, and that deans were held in great esteem, she regarded her sister Elizabeth, *smiling*. Most undoubtedly she was reflecting that my elevation would bring us more on an equality with the rank of Wahlen.

The new perspective that opened upon us put all my family in activity. The revenues of my new situation were computed; and although they exceeded five times what my living produced, we found means to spend the whole in speculation.

'According to our calculation,' said I, 'I shall enjoy a better income, but not better days than I have passed here. We shall have finer furniture, but not more contented hearts; I shall have less trouble, but more cares. What have we wanted hitherto? when we cast up our accounts on st. Sylvester's day, we had nothing left it is true, but we owed nothing; and if it be the same in our new situation, what shall we have gained by the change, my children?'

They all listened to my reflections with a serious air, except Mina, who would prove to me, with her usual vivacity, that it was better to be a dean than a simple parson; that we should be much more at our ease with twelve hundred crowns than two hundred; 'and that we shall be much happier,' added she bouncing with with joy.

The old dean died about a month after, and I received a note from the president, inviting me to present a request to the consistory for form sake, which I did immediately. The whole country knew by this time that I was to suc-

ceed to the reversion, and I did not in the least doubt it. Our little hoard was expended in purchasing a second hand coach; as Frederic had intimated to me that a dean should have one. The coach led the way for other expenses. The greatest part of our plate was metamorphosed into clothes; the present was overlooked; we existed but in hope.

CHAP. XXIV.

Regret and sorrow.

We were one day assembled, chatting about our future expectations, and waiting for uncle Frederic, who had promised to come. Instead of him we received a letter from his sister, informing me that her brother had died in the night of an apoplectic stroke. We were, as may be conceived, plunged into the deepest affliction; for, although our acquaintance with that excellent man was recent, it bore all the characters of old established friendship. He was, besides, my only friend; and how many times, looking at my children with the eyes of a father, had I thought that, if God disposed of me, he would be a father to them! he treated them as his children, and they all, to the very smallest, shed bitter tears on learning this cruel event. 'Our poor uncle! our dear uncle! our good friend!' repeated we alternately and our tears and sighs recommenced. We made many reflections on the instability of life, and the projects of men; alas! we thought only of those formed by uncle Frederic for himself, and did not suspect that those which immediately concerned us, were deranged.

'My children,' cried I, 'would not one think that the hand of death had struck us also? it seems to me at present as if I cared very little for my advancement; no body will call me Mr. dean with such cordiality and affection as our good friend would have done.'

'I should now be as well pleased to go a foot,' said Mina; 'the coach no longer gives me any pleasure, since poor uncle Frederic is not to see it.'

We passed the rest of the day in a sort of solemn sadness, which was, however, relieved at times, by the consoling idea of our hopes, of which we were reminded by our gratitude toward the good man, to whom we were indebted for them.

Next day in the evening we were again sorrowfully assembled, when a letter was brought me from one of the assessors of the consistory, containing a compliment of condolence, and an intimation that, upon the news of the bookseller's death, the consistory had changed their resolution with respect to me.

Although I was extremely affected by this unexpected blow, I had sufficient presence of mind, however, to put my letter in my pocket after having read it, without any one taking notice of its effect upon me. I went up into my chamber.

It was in autumn; the weather was dark and cloudy. I stood at the window, and looked toward the village:—it was a consolation for me to think, at least, that I was not to quit those cottages, among which I had lived so long, and where I was so well beloved. I saw the lights appear one after another in every house, and that reminded me of the first day I had passed in the parish, when I came to preach my trial sermon; and how happy did I not esteem myself then to obtain a place which I disdained present!

'Ingrate that I am!' cried I, 'how many hours of happiness have I not passed in it! how often at this window have I, from the bottom of my heart, thanked the supreme being for the lot he had assigned me!'

These reflections tranquillized me, and I went down in the best disposition of mind to announce the disappointment of our hopes, and to console my family as I was consoled myself.

My six children were sitting round their mother, by the light of a little lamp, exactly in the spot where my predecessor's wife had closed the eyes of her five children. Mine were talking seriously. It was about uncle Frederic. I walked up and down the room, attending to the conversation, to catch a favorable moment to communicate the sad intelligence.

My son was making a panegyric of the stoic philosophy on the subject of death.

'Even were it in my power,' said Elizabeth, 'to become as cold and insensible as the firmest of your philosophers, I would not choose it; no, although the idea of separating from any one I love, makes me tremble, I would not deprive myself of the sad consolation of bidding him farewell, nor of receiving his. Whatever may be the sorrows that await me in this life, my heart will anticipate them, and I will bear them with patience.'

'But what he says is not true,' retorted Mina, 'or those pretended sages were not unfortunate; or they were nothing but proud fools, who only concealed their grief.—Let them say what they will, I can laugh at some ills just as well as the philosophers; but there are real misfortunes that would excite a very different effect.'

'Well said, Mina,' observed I, 'I am perfectly of your opinion; and he who has no tears for real misfortunes, appear to me to be far from estimable. There are, as you say, misfortunes which break the heart, and heaven protect us from encountering any such; but for every thing else that men call misfortune, poverty, want, the contempt of the rich, we will know how to bear it all.'

Mina beheld me with an air of astonishment. That was not altogether her opinion. 'What are the losses'

of our happiness?' continued I. 'Love, confidence, union, and a good conscience. Suppose for an instant that we should become still poorer than we are, what should we lose? nothing of all that; it would then be easy for us to be stoics. I am convinced that a greater degree of poverty would unite us perhaps more; our friendship, our confidence would become more unbounded and expresive. The daughter who nourished her father in prison with the milk of her breast, must have experienced moments of transcendent happiness, of which we can form no idea; and when I consider human life, such as it is in reality, so fugitive that we are hardly born, when we pass, and are forgotten—when I reflect that in that very place where you are conversing at present with tenderness and confidence, it is thirty-five years since the hearts of five human beings, in the flower of their age, ceased to beat, without any person but me recalling to mind their existence; and that ourselves, and all that occupies us at this instant will be forgotten in the same space of time, I am tempted to take you all in my arms, and tell you to love one another, and love me, for life is not worth forming other plans or wishes. And what,' continued I, 'even were we to remain here, my dear children, would our happiness be diminished? we are poor, but what is it to be rich? if I were a dean, should we not be obliged to live with people richer than ourselves, and who would surpass us in expense? can we not, if we have a mind, take a ride in the coach we have bought? our neighbors have already offered to lend us horses. We can be happy as we were before.'

'But, dear papa,' demanded Mina, with inquietude, what do you mean?'

'I mean literally what I say, my child—I am not to be a dean; but I will remain what I am, pastor of Eizebach, and the happiest of fathers.'

The mute stupor occasioned by my words, gave me time to draw the letter from my pocket, and to read it.

'After all we have done, while we were deluded by those futile hopes,' said I, with as much calmness as I could affect, 'it is doubtless cruel to behold them blasted; but we must submit, and I am persuaded that we shall all make the sacrifice with a good grace: I expect it of you all, my children.'

'Oh, yes,' cried the three little ones, provided we go but once in the coach!'

'You shall go my children.'

My wife and Elizabeth embraced each other, weeping. Augusta said to me in a low voice—'the blow is rude—we shall feel it a long time.'

Elizabeth, for whom it was probably ruder still, said not a word; but, wiping her eyes, looked at me with a forced smile, and resumed her work.

'I have not well calculated yet, father,' cried Charles, with a seriousness somewhat affected, 'whether we have reason to rejoice or repine at remaining here; therefore I will neither do one nor the other.'

'You are a blockhead with your indifference and your incertitude!' said Mina, pettishly; 'for my part I will afflict myself with all my heart; and notwithstanding all you tell us, to console us, we are all afflicted: thou especially, poor Elizabeth, who sittest there without saying a word, thou dost not think the less.'

Elizabeth, weeping, threw herself into her sister's arms, and they remained some time in this attitude. I was uneasy at it; as I knew Elizabeth, I perceived there was some mystery in it.

'Prithee, Mina,' said I, 'why has Elizabeth more cause to be afflicted than we have?'

'Because she is the most susceptible,' replied Mina, a little confused, and then asked two or three questions to turn the conversation.

'Sit down in a circle,' said I to them, 'for we must not let this minute pass without taking a salutary resolution.'

I then declared to them that there was not the smallest shadow of hope that I should ever obtain a better living than what I occupied; that the evident injustice of the consistory would be a reason never to do any thing for me. I had some trouble to make my children comprehend that

'They seldom pardon who have done the wrong.'

'For my part,' added I, 'I am determined never to solicit any thing, but to live and die here. We must resume our former simplicity, and by strict economy and unremitting labor endeavor to repair our imprudences, and the ruin of our hopes.'

Mina burst into tears.

'Dost thou recollect, Mina,' said I to her, 'the courage with which thou didst exclaim, some months ago, '*offer a cock to Æsculapius, the sacrifice is consummated.*' —I wish my dear children, that this lesson may be useful to us. We have hands, let us work to live; let us live to love each other, and let us love each other to be happy.'

'I ceased to speak, yet my heart was still oppressed. My son Charles cried with a solemn tone, and raising his hand—'let every one who is of my father's mind, raise their hand.'

He made this proposal with so much seriousness, that the scene had the air of a public decision. The hands of Augusta and Elizabeth were lifted instantaneously; the three youngest, thinking it was a piece of diversion, lifted their little hands as high as they could, laughing; I lifted mine mechanically; and Mina lifted hers last of all, laughing too at the circle of hands in the air. The victory was ours. Mina displayed more fortitude than all the rest. She rose up, and took her spinning-wheel, saying—'come, my old friend, I will leave thee no longer for patches and scraps; but let them say what they will, I will keep my lilac robe and my pretty bonnet: they were my poor uncle's first present.

CHAP. XXV.

The discovery.

THERE lived in our neighborhood a young man of good property, who rented a little domain, in which he had been settled some time. He was sober and industrious, and enjoyed a very good reputation. As some parts of his farm bordered on my land, he frequently came to see me about business, and on those occasions would pass a quarter of an hour with us. These short visits had, however, given him many opportunities of remarking that our Elizabeth was handsome, modest, and a good housewife. He had, in consequence, caused me to be sounded, to know if he might indulge any hopes of obtaining her in marriage. I must acknowledge to the reader that this proposal gave me pain, for it was at the moment I was certain of becoming a dean. The young man was unacquainted with it; but although I could not object to him, I had begun to think that my daughters might pretend to something beyond a farmer's wife, I returned for answer, that Elizabeth was too young, and that I did not think of marrying her so soon, and I thought the affair at an end.

But the young farmer had not received this answer as an absolute refusal; he came often to see me, and testified a great deal of frendship, without mentioning a word, however, of what he desired; and while he never neglected any occasion of making known the affluent state of his fortune, he did it in a manner so noble and delicate, that it pleased me extremely.

In our actual circumstances I bethought of him.

'If he will wait two years longer,' said I, 'he may have Elizabeth: she will remain in the neighborhood, and my other children will have in her an additional support.'

My wife thought as I did; but she considered Elizabeth too young, even to speak to her of marriage yet.

'We must, however,' observed I, 'give some hopes to mr. Salzman, or he will form an attachment elsewhere; and can we without Elizabeth's consent? she is still a child, you will tell me; but she is seventeen, and children too have their rights which ought to be respected.

That evening, therefore, when the little ones were gone to bed, I took an opportunity to introduce the subject.

'My dear children,' said I, 'it is time to make you acquainted with one side of the human heart, which is still new for you. You love your mother and me, we love you, and you love one another tenderly; but besides this love, inspired and nourished by the ties of blood, there exits another of a very different nature. I desire you will and thou especially, Elizabeth, listen to me with attention.'

My wife smiled at my exordium, and I did so myself; for in truth I did not well know how to enter upon what I had to say. Charles shut his Seneca, which he had been reading to find arguments against Mina, and approached us. Our smiles caught the three children. Mina tittered.

'I perceive,' cried I, turning to her, 'that what I have mentioned appears singular and ridiculous to you; however——'

'It does not seem to me in the smallest degree ridiculous,' interrupted she, 'for one may love ten different persons ten different ways: one's father differently from one's mother, a brother differently from a sister, and all differently from a lover.'

She blushed in pronouncing the last word.

'How, Mina!' cried I, quite astonished at her reply; 'and who has taught thee to make those distinctions?'

'I know it,' answered she, a little confounded, 'by some books the miss Salzbergs lent me, and which I must now return. I ventured to think, dear papa, that, habitually condemned as we are to the most profound solitude, you might permit us to read such books.'

I knew not what to say. I looked at my wife, shaking my head. At last I had the books brought to me. Charles fell upon them with an avidity which made me judge that he at least was perfectly innocent; it was, therefore, entirely to his sisters that I adderessed myself.

'So then, young ladies, you read novels? since it is thus, I may spare myself a great deal of words.'

'Elizabeth,' replied Mina, 'has not read a line; it was in vain that I pressed her.'

'But, doubtless,' cried I, 'you have given her some details of the ten sorts of love?'

'Ten sorts?' exclaimed my son; 'I should be very curious to hear them named.'

'Ah, dear father!' replied Mina, with great seriousness and an air of persuasion, as if she wished to inform us of something, 'all these loves have their seat in the soul, and their principle in the heart of man; it is an effect of our nature and organization, like breathing, hunger, thirst, &c. Man alone among all the animals has been gifted with love. Our english natural history says, that we cannot sufficiently thank God for not having left those principles at the discretion of man, who might make a bad use of them. We love as we breathe, without being able to prevent it, and like the blood which circulates without

our perceiving it. There is what I have learned in these books; but I again declare that Elizabeth would not read one single line.'

My wife turned over the books with anxiety. I shook my head with vexation; I was still more angry with myself than with my daughter: it seemed to me that I might and ought to have watched Mina better. In a head like hers the principles she had just declared as articles of faith, might become very dangerous; but I thought it more prudent not to combat them at this moment. Who knows if she would not have the advantage? and I observed that Charles listened with exceeding great attention and curiosity, appearing to wait and desire that I should make his sister speak. I took another determination.

'I may then,' said I to them, 'spare myself the introduction I was about to make, and proceed to the fact. Elizabeth, young Salzman loves you, and asks you in marriage?'

The two girls turned pale, and stared at each other. I continued—

'You are still very young, my child.'

'Oh yes, much too young!' said my wife.

'Oh yes, dear mamma,' cried Mina, suddenly taking courage, 'much too young!—are you not, Eliza?—you are a great deal too young!'

Elizabeth, growing still paler, and trembling like a leaf, threw herself into her mother's arms, crying—'oh dear mother, how unhappy am I!—pardon, oh! pardon your daughter!'

'All is ruined?' exclaimed Mina, with a gesture of despair.

I will not attempt to describe the impression made upon us by these few words. Astonishment, emotion, fear, every thing deprived us of the power of articulating a word; our looks were fixed upon the pale lips of Eliza-

beth, and we waited, shuddering, for what she was going to say.

'Elizabeth,' pronounced my wife at last, with the tone of affright, 'what am I to pardon thee!'

Elizabeth started up, and recoiled some steps: her head was inclined upon her bosom, and her hands clasped together;—she seemed to rely less upon our love than our compassion.

'My dear Elizabeth,' said I, approaching her.

Without changing her attitude, she cried, in a scarcely audible voice—'I love!—I love passionately! my heart—my heart belongs to the baron Von Wahlen!'*

These few words discovered the extent of our misfortune. Wahlen's attentions the day he had dined with us, and his looks had not escaped me. I had questioned Frederic respecting the young man, and he informed me that he was a nobleman of a very ancient family, and nephew to a man who was extremely haughty, and vain of his birth. From that moment I had thought no more about it. The avowal of my daughter made me lose all my resolution; my wife, on the contrary, recovered hers.

'To the baron Von Wahlen!' repeated she; 'Elizabeth, if it be not pride or something worse, what name shall I give to such extravagancy?—speak to her, dear husband; it is you, it is her father should speak to her.'

I was really confounded at what I had heard.

'What dost thou wish me to say, dear wife!' cried I. 'We were happy, too happy! behold all I know. At present I see nothing in the future but tears, groans, and lamentations! oh!——but come, come, my children, let

* By the courtesy of Germany, all the sons and daughters of the nobility take the title of their parents. Thus the children of a prince are all princes and princesses, of a duke, all dukes and duchesses, &c. Trans.

ais sit down in the place where the good widow wept such bitter tears over her five children—over her daughter of eighteen, beautiful and virtuous. Must I also behold mine die of a broken heart, after long and cruel sorrows? God of compassion! if such be thy will, give us patience, and receive us all in thy bosom!'

'But, my dear,' said my wife to me, 'I do not see this great misfortune. Elizabeth is reasonable.'

'Thou knowest reason, my dear wife, and thou hast forgotten love.'

'Ah, my mother!' cried Elizabeth, extending her arms toward her, 'no, I cannot cease to love; although it were to cost me my life, I cannot—no, I cannot!'

My wife, whose notions of loving before twenty are already known, was completely soured. The sentiment expressed by Elizabeth, had at first appeared to her a folly; at present she saw nothing in it but obstinacy, or something worse. She repulsed the poor girl, who had approached her; and seeing the novels still upon the table, cried out with fury—'those miserable books!' and threw them violently to the other end of the room.

Never had I seen my wife really in a passion before: her action and tone were so different from her usual calmness! the attitude of Elizabeth, the cries of Mina, who protested to her mother that her sister had never touched one of the books, all conspired to make me feel the most agonizing sensations; it was the first time I had ever witnessed such a scene in my family. My wife turned to Elizabeth, who, with her head hanging down, and her hands crossed, upon her breast, seemed like a criminal waiting to hear his sentence.

'Elizabeth,' said she to her, 'thou must be reasonable. Be so this very moment, I command thee, and tell me thou wilt no longer love this baron, this——'

Elizabeth would have approached her mother, but she repulsed her again, saying—'I forbid thee to touch me till thou hast told me thou wilt love him no longer!'

'I have then no mother!' cried the poor girl.

'And I no more a daughter!' said my wife.

Elizabeth sunk upon the bosom of Mina, and she, whose first movement was always extremely violent, pressed her in her arms, exclaiming—'come, Elizabeth, thou hast still a sister who would give her life and all for thee!—oh my poor innocent sister!'

She pronounced this with an expression and a look calculated to irritate the mildest of mothers. Augusta, once out of her temper, contained herself no longer. She said something very harsh to Mina, and lifted her hand to strike her. Charles precipitated himself between them, and received the blow intended for his sister. He seized his mother's arm, and kissed it a hundred times, repeating—'oh my mother! let it not be said that you have punished one of your children in anger!'

Mina brought Elizabeth over to me, and said with anguish—'help me to support her, dear father; it is your eldest child that is dying!'

Elizabeth, swooning, fell into my arms.

'Listen, Elizabeth,' cried my wife, making a menacing gesture, 'listen! if thou dost not promise this moment to renounce thy unworthy seducer, to renounce him for ever, I swear to thee that——'

Elizabeth trembled violently in my arms.

'Oh, do not curse her!' cried Mina.

'Dear wife,' said I, 'let us rather die, if it must be so.

Here, on this spot where I am sitting with my agonizing daughter in my arms, a good mother saw hers depart before her; but she blessed them—but she laid her maternal hand upon their icy forehead. 'Elizabeth,' cried I, bursting into tears, 'thou hast afflicted us, but may the benediction of thy father and of thy good mother be a consolation to thy heart.'

Mina then fell on her knees before me, and Charles followed her example. I stretched my arms toward them, to draw them all closer to me. Elizabeth, too much affected to bear this scene any longer, lost all sense; her arms, which were entwined around me, fell without force; her head hung back; she remained void of motion or color. 'She is dying!' shrieked we all. At this cry the three children, who were sleeping in the adjoining chamber, came running in, and seeing their sister lifeless, cried, and wept, and threw themselves on their knees beside her likewise. My wife, scarcely able to stand, came to precipitate herself upon the body of her beloved daughter, embraced her with a convulsive movement, called her with a piteous accent, bathed her with tears, and covered her pale lips and inanimate arms with kisses. Elizabeth awoke at last, as a child in such a situation always should, in the bosom of her beloved mother, and in the midst of a family offering up the most ardent prayers, who, still on their knees, crowded around her, uttering cries of joy; and I myself could only raise my hands to heaven, and implore a benediction upon us all.

When a mother has been harsh to her child, her maternal love usually acquires new force. I saw their eyes beam with a more vivid and tender expression; I saw my daughter imprint the hand of her mother with kisses, who withdrew it only to throw both about her daughter's neck, and blessing her a thousand times, strain her to her maternal lips. The caresses became general.

'Naughty boy! whispered Mina to Charles, 'why did you rob me of that blow?'

The mother kissed her three little ones, and sent them

again to bed; and we sat down with our daughters placed between us. We were all love and concord; yet these sentiments were alloyed with a sort of embarrassment: an explanation was to take place, and we were individually preparing in silence to render it as mild and tender as possible.

Elizabeth and Mina then recounted in detail what the reader knows already concerning the birth of the passion between my daughter and Wahlen. I represented gently to Elizabeth how slender were her hopes. She replied by a profound sigh.

'Ah, my child!' said I, 'I am sure that if you espouse young Salzman, Wahlen will soon be forgotten.'

'No, never, never!' cried she; 'I will not, I cannot forget him: but, dear father, if you ordain it, and my good mother wish that I become the wife of Salzman, I will obey.'

'Elizabeth, my child,' said I, 'thou knowest we are poor, and very poor. Salzman is rich; he is your equal; but, what is much better, he is honest and artless, and his heart is good, and entirely devoted to thee: and believe me, my love, that such qualities bid fairer for happiness than the intercourse and false politeness of the world. In Wahlen's family* my Elizabeth would be despised, notwithstanding the native nobility of her heart. In that of Salzman she will be honored as she deserves to be: thou wilt become the support of thy brothers and sisters, and that vocation is more noble, more perfect than what love inspires.'

'Ah, my dear father,' replied she, 'even if that were not the case, it would suffice for me that it was your will and pleasure. I shall be happy to fulfil the desires of my good parents: if you will it then, dear father, I will obey.'

'My child,' returned I, 'examine thy heart well, to

* The nobility of Germany are perhaps the most rigid with respect to marriage alliances in the world, which may be partly accounted for by the established law of admitting none to certain employments, especially ecclesiastical benefices, but such as can produce full proofs of nobility in both the male and female line. *Transl.*

know if it be capable of such a sacrifice, and have the strength to consummate it.'

She rose up with a kind of solemnity, and said—'this evening have I acquired strength sufficient for any sacrifice; I will suffer any thing rather than witness the affliction of my father, and the wrath of my mother.—No, I would not again behold such a scene, were I to obtain it by the accomplishment of all my wishes. I will not deceive you, my father: I have told Wahlen I loved him that I shall love him while I exist. Never will he be forgotten, but I alone shall know it; and if it be your desire, I will marry mr. Salzman.'

I avow that I was proud, and rejoiced to find my daughter capable of such an effort, and I was determined to profit by it. She was so young, and had seen so little of Wahlen, that I readily concurred in the opinion which was most agreeable to me, that she deceived herself in supposing her love invincible.

'She will not be the wife of Salzman one month,' thought I, 'when Wahlen will be totally forgotten. The duties of a spouse and mother will soon occupy her affectionate heart, and replace the enthusiasm of youth. She will be delighted on finding herself at the head of a good farm, to remain near us, and be the support of her brothers and sisters.'

'I accept thy devotion, dear child,' said I to her; 'receive my blessing. Thou, the best of daughters and of sisters, thou wilt be the happiest of wives and mothers.'—She shook her head.—'Oh my Elizabeth! thou mayest believe me, if I thought that thy tears would flow only during one year, far from exacting this sacrifice, I would be the first to favor thy love. But——

'Let us speak no more of that, dear father,' interrupted she; 'let us never mention it. You want my promise; I give it you, and hope to have strength to keep it in its full extent. It is not happines I pretend to, for the

present at least,' said she, with a celestial smile, and a look directed toward heaven, which indicated what she thought, and of whom she expected the recompence due to her devotion; 'but it suffices I shall be—I am a happy daughter.'

The tone with which she pronounced these words rent my soul, but the persuasion that I was doing right tranquillized me.

'May I tell mr. Salzman,' demanded I, 'that you consent to marry him?'

She inclined her head in sign of consent.

'To-morrow, Elizabeth. Such a good girl is not too young to become the mother of a family: to-morrow, then, I will speak to him; and your mother's birth-day shall be that of your wedding.'

'Yes, dear father,' answered she, trembling, 'just as you shall please.' She stopped. 'But to-morrow!' resumed she. 'If you will grant me one day—only one day to recover myself. But,' continued she, 'it is quite equal; the resolution I have taken strengthens every minute, and it is quite equal. To-morrow, then, I will be a—happy daughter.'

I embraced her with joy.

'To-morrow!' exclaimed my wife, staring with amazement. 'I do not know, dear friend, but that appears to me so extraordinary. She is to promise to-morrow to espouse a man she does not love! I ask thee, in my turn, are we doing right? are we not deceiving the young man? ought we not to tell him that she loves another?'

I smiled.—'Dear wife, we ought, if the heart of Elizabeth were less known to us, but we know what a treasure we bestow upon Salzman: and this little concealment is only what is required by prudence.'

'Heaven preserve me from it!' cried she, rising up; 'such a concealment would be the basest deception; I should tremble. What do I say? I could not bear to see my Elizabeth present herself at the altar with infidelity in her heart; no, let us be all unfortunate rather than expose our daughter to become what is most odious—an unfaithful wife? my children, any thing—any thing before such a misfortune!'

I did what I could to calm my wife, and make her listen to reason: she was intractable upon that head. Elizabeth listened with a secret pleasure, which glowed in her countenance. Mina took a part against me with extreme vivacity, and Charles also with a firm seriousness. In fine, tired with contention, I ended with my accustomed *refrein*—'let us go to bed.'

When I was alone with Augusta, I wanted to give her a just notion of love, which she understood so little; but it was to no purpose.

'I see at present,' said she, 'that Elizabeth's passion is of the kind that lasts, of the only one that I call love. She has said that it would never end. Would she say it if she did not feel it? oh! I know by my own experience it is the same love I feel for thee, that which never cools. Let us not deliver up our excellent daughter to the torture of a hopeless love contrary to her virtue, which would empoison her whole life, and destroy her happiness, not only in this world, but perhaps in the other; let us not cause her to live and die in doleful struggles.'

'What will become of her love for Wahlen!'

'Oh! God grant that it may be as you suppose!'

'It will if she marry Salzman, be assured of it.'

Thus did we long turn about in a circle of despair, not knowing how to act, until sleep, the giver of good, came to seal our eyes.

CHAP. XXVI.

War.

'Ah! that unlucky journey to town!' exclaimed I, one morning getting up.

'Ah! that unlucky journey to town!' exclaimed my wife, bringing in breakfast.

'I wish I had never seen the city!' cried Elizabeth, sighing.

'Ah! believe me,' said Mina, 'what happens to us is neither owing to the city nor to the village, but solely to our hearts.'

Whether it was she or we who were right, and perhaps we were all right, it is not less certain that our happiness was destroyed. From this day there was a sort of war waged between us in all the customary forms. It was carried on sometimes by force, sometimes by stratagem: now we went direct to the attack, at other times we took circuitous ways. If there had been only two contending parties, one might hope after a little disputation to gain the victory; but there were three parties formed among us, and when one attacked, the other two were sure to join against him.

Elizabeth was no longer so submissive: when I reminded her of her promise, she intrenched herself behind her mother's opinion, against the treason of espousing one man while she had the image of another in her heart; and Mina ranged herself on her side instantly.

If my wife blamed the inconsistency of loving at seventeen, and of loving a baron, the girls fell back upon

what I had once said before them of the weakness of the human heart; and I was forced to say the same thing over again in making them a few exhortations. If my wife and I did not agree, Mina presently interfered, and strove to animate us, well knowing her sister would not be married as long as we were not of the same opinion. If I made a pathetic discourse, which was pretty much my way, at the moment my wife and Eliza became softened, and that I thought I had gained my cause, miss Mina would begin another more pathetic still, in which all the art of rhetoric was exhausted. She menaced Elizabeth with the death of Wahlen, and my wife with that of Elizabeth; she awakened with address the horror of deceiving Salzman; she threw herself on her sister's neck, she kissed her mother's hands, and in a few instants they embraced all three, and wept together, and my pains were thrown away. I brought Elizabeth to yield to every thing I pleased when I was alone with her; but the nights spent with Mina, and their secret conferences, destroyed all again.

I went even so far to compromise my paternal dignity to such a point, as to conjure this little girl to join my party, and assist me to gain over her sister. I represented to her how much Elizabeth's union with Salzman would contribute to tranquillize her, and render us all happy. 'And thyself, Mina,' added I, 'when once thy sister is established, wilt find a match much more readily.

These conversations between a father and his daughter were singular enough. Never had I spoken with less effect, and Mina smiled sometimes at her easy triumph. One day, however, that I was picturing to her the happiness we should all enjoy if her sister married Salzman, she grew more serious, and said to me with tears in her eyes—'dear papa, you know the human heart undoubtedly better than we; but you do not know that of Elizabeth, if you think that the promptitude with which she has consented to a painful sacrifice, springs from any coolness toward Wahlen. I have

a great deal to do, I who know her better than you do, to hinder her from consummating this cruel sacrifice; for she would rather die in obeying you, than live even with Wahlen contrary to your approbation. because in general, death appears to her to be preferable to life. There are hearts, dear father, which the weight of a single tear is sufficient to distress, and that of Elizabeth is of the number. ' And tell me, dear father, have you ever known her to forget or even to love less what she has loved once? is it Elizabeth who can cease to love? oh! no, no, I am convinced she cannot be happy, that she cannot live except with Wahlen.'

' But, my child,' cried I, ' how can you hope for what is impossible?'

' Dear father, Elizabeth does more than hope; she has such a confidence in him she loves, she believes, she hopes with such firmness, that your doubts would vanish before her like shadows. I tell you again, dear papa, you do not know my sister's heart; no, it is an impossibility that she can sacrifice—it is a certitude of happines, and of what happiness! oh! if you but heard Elizabeth speak of her union with Wahlen, you would soon see that there is no other alternative but a life of happiness such as she decribes it, or a lingering, painful death.'

Mina wept, and concluded with a solemn air—' I am convinced, father, that all those who wish my sister to renounce Wahlen, wish her death, and that is the reason I will do all that depends upon me to prevent it: believe what I tell you, Elizabeth is very unhappy!'

'She smiled this morning with an air of perfect serenity,' observed I.

' Father,' replied she, ' Elizabeth would smile, although her heart were broken. Do not trust to her smiles; Arria smiled when she drew the dagger out of her bosom. Oh my father! do not render her miserable; Elizabeth is like the sensitive, which lets fall its leaves the moment they are touched.'

'Yes, Mina, but it soon raises them up.'

And what would you say, father, if she raised them, not?'

This conversation gave me much anguish; but I thought it was my duty as a father to persist with firmness and address in my resolution.

I commenced by making Elizabeth promise me not to see Wahlen without my knowledge, nor to write to him any more. She promised me without making the smallest objection, and a sweet smile appeared upon her lips, but at the same time her bosom swelled with an interior sigh. Her smile pierced my soul: it reminded me of what Mina had said, and I fancied I saw Arria drawing out the dagger from her bleeding bosom. But I reflected that I could at any time give her back her promise, and that quieted me.

During some days I said nothing more on the subject, and even hinted that perhaps some fortunate event might occur. It was one of my favorite theses, that we should refer all to fate, or rather to providence; and I think so still with some restrictions. I was saying one day, that if many things were left to chance, or to our destiny, we should be less uneasy about the future.

'Father,' replied Charles, 'that may be true in certain cases; but in general men should not abandon their projects and conduct to fate. A wise man will foresee events, and not risk being taken unawares; although events are doubtless directed by a superior power, we should act as if they depended upon ourselves. Would a good mariner leave to fate the care of holding the helm, and steering his ship, even were a thousand vessels to have been happily drifted by chance?'

'Chance, my son! say providence, which knows better than we what is proper for us.'

'Well then, father, providence sends as it pleases the tempest and the calm, and leaves to the pilot the care of steering the ship among the rocks, of preserving it from the storm, and of conducting it into port.'

'That is true,' said I, 'but with some modifications.'

'And what would not be true, father, with some modifications?'

My intention was, however, not to leave to chance the management of this affair: I wished, on the contrary, to follow my plan. I sent word to Salzman, therefore, that I should be glad to see him, and he came. I thought that by coming habitually to our house, he would give a preponderance to my party, and help to lead Elizabeth to the point I wished. I affected much indifference to impose upon Mina, who watched me narrowly. I facilitated an occasion for Elizabeth to withdraw, and even gave her something to do which took her up some time; but I took care to start a conversation between my wife and Salzman, because I knew that it sufficed to chat with her half an hour, for her to invite her guest to come again. When Salzman rose up to take leave, I remained perfectly still, and contented myself with saluting him, in order that Mina might have nothing to say; but my wife pressed him with the more earnestness to renew his visits.

Salzman pleased all my family except Elizabeth, who had not looked at him. At the first his face had nothing remarkable; but as soon as he was spoken to, it became extremely interesting by the expression of goodness and cordiality which animated his look and his smile. What might have been wanting to him in point of cultivation of mind, and usage of the world, was made up in that natural politeness which emanates from the heart, and an intelligent upright judgment. Mina, for the first time, exclaimed when he was gone—'Ah, that fatal journey to town!'

After my wife had praised his sentiments, and Mina his large black eyes, his smile, and the sound of his voice, I said to them—'Well now, do you not think that if Elizabeth marry him, she may forget Wahlen, and live happy?'

'Yes, any other but she,' replied Mina, 'but not Elizabeth, father; there are persons whose sorrows are not regulated according to circumstances. Elizabeth must never have loved, or else eternally.'

'You are an idiot with your eternal love!' retorted I; and turning to my wife—'how happy should we be, Augusta, to see Elizabeth united to such a good young man! I will hope still. So far as I can judge, Wahlen is also a worthy noble young man, and perhaps is sorry at this moment for having involved Elizabeth in this labyrinth. Both of them are innocent, dear Augusta; their youth, their glowing hearts, their exalted imagination, old Mary, and little Annette are the sole causes of all that afflicts us. If Wahlen knew what was going on here, I am sure he would give up Elizabeth, and that she would soon recover her peace of mind.'

'Dear friend,' cried Augusta, 'may God grant it! mr. Salzman is so sincere, so upright, so good, that—'

'Oh yes!' said Mina, with an ironical smile, 'and as he is so good, so upright, and so sincere, he will be the easier deceived. It is scandalous! this excellent man comes to us with an open, honest heart, and we conceal from him precisely what is the most important for him to know—the state of Elizabeth's heart. Indeed mother—if that be generous—'

'Hold your tongue,' cried I, angrily.

'It is certain that there is something in it which is not fair father,' observed Charles, with his grave tone.

His mother made him a sign of encouragement, and he continued.

'Perhaps this passion of Elizabeth's for baron Wahlen is, in spite of all Mina's novels, not of such great consequence as you suppose, and might be mentioned quite simply to mr. Salzman. If he persist in wishing to marry Eliza, and Wahlen consent, we shall have satisfied our consciences, and then see which has known Eliza's heart better, thou Mina, or my father.'

'And if it were I,' said Mina, 'if our Elizabeth became the victim, if she turned her dying looks upon her brother Charles, would he not repent having given this advice?'

'But is it I who force Elizabeth? is it not her business to judge of her love?'

During this dispute between the brother and sister I was reflecting; and though I was inwardly persuaded that my daughter's passion would not last, I was inclined to follow my son's advice; besides, I have always liked to live in peace with my conscience; so it was decided that the first time Salzman should say a word to me about Elizabeth, I should confide to him the whole history of her love for Wahlen.

Oh, how unjust is man! he not only wants others to be virtuous, but will have them to be so his own way. A virtue which crosses us becomes almost a vice in our eyes.

On this occasion every one of us was more bent upon supporting our own opinion than studying Elizabeth's happiness. My wife would have pardoned her love, if she had been two years older. I was only displeased on account of Wahlen's rank. Mina thought of nothing but her novels. Each of us wished what was impossible; and instead of uniting for the welfare of our daughter, we were doing every thing that was calculated to trouble it forever. But I was convinced that my duty as a father required that I should vanquish this passion.

CHAP. XXVII.

The generous rival.

THE next time Salzman came to our house, I brought him to walk with me in the garden. He soon spoke to me of Elizabeth. I then revealed the truth concerning the state of her heart; I attenuated the force of her passion a little, and exaggerated as much as I could our hopes that it would die away. I told him that we had resolved in family, not to make a mystery of it to him, although Elizabeth had promised us the sacrifice, and that I was well convinced it would become easy in a short time.

The good young man appeared extremely affected; he sighed, and cast down his eyes. After a long pause he told me that my confidence gave him infinite pain.

'Never in my life,' said he, laying his hand to his breast, 'has any thing—' he remained some instants in silence; then resumed, in a faltering, trembling voice—'pardon, dear pastor, pardon me if I afflict your heart by my sufferings. May your amiable Eliza be as happy as I would have striven to make her. Oh! he whom she loves must render her days happy. But,' continued he, lowering his voice, and hesitating, 'you have said something to me about obstacles to this union. I do not know what they may be, but if it were in my power—if it were money for instance.—My dear pastor, you owe me a consolation, and the half of what I possess is at your service.'

He expressed that in a manner so modest, so timid,

and with such a genuine air of sincerity, that I could not but grasp his hand, and press it to my heart.

'That young man has done me a great deal of injury,' added he; 'but I would love him if he should render miss Elizabeth happy; and I repeat it to you, if the half of my fortune—did it not belong to miss Eliza? if—but she must not know it; she would think herself under an obligation, and that would give her pain, and it would be I —I alone—oh! let Elizabeth be happy, and I shall be less to be pitied!'

Never, no, never could I do justice to the delicacy, the sentiment, the noble simplicity which accompanied this offer. I clasped his hand to my breast, and would have given the world for Elizabeth to have witnessed this conversation.

I answered him, that he certainly had not understood me, and gave him a circumstantial detail of Wahlen's love for Elizabeth, and of all that had passed since, without attempting farther to disguise the truth.

For nothing in the world would I have guarded the least reserve with him. I told him what Elizabeth herself thought of her attachment for Wahlen, and that it was through filial obedience she had promised me to marry Salzman.

Doubtless it was only the last words that struck him. I perceived it by the sudden alteration of his countenance, and the sound of his voice. His eyes shone with pleasure.

'Ah!' cried he, 'have I heard it right? oh, I may then hope! is it indeed true? is Elizabeth willing to render me the happiest man upon earth?'

I told him again that she consented through obedience, but that we, her parents, could not, so long as she continued to love another.—'We are sure,' added I, 'that it will not last; and when she knows you better, my good Salzman, she will give you not only her hand, but her heart also.'

He made no reply, but appeared to reflect. At length, with an emotion which he strove in vain to hide, he said, hesitating—'I perceive—I understand—when Elizabeth ceases to love this young man. I see that I—but you hope it, you say? and what is it that gives you reason to presume it?'

'It is because love, however violent it may be,' answered I, 'always cools.'

He was silent, and shook his head slowly. Then he said, in a mild voice—'if the young man love her like me—I do not know him, nor do I desire it; but if she love him as you say, if—ah! if one could thus cease to love, it would be all equal whom we loved! my love might cease also; and I feel my dear pastor, that it will last forever: no, no, I should be ashamed to wish so ardently, if I were not sure of wishing it always. I feel it, I shall be unhappy! very unhappy! but I would not desire to cease to love.'

I perceived that this sensible young man thought of love like my two daughters. I represented to him that when love is neither nurtered by hope, nor letters, nor presence, it must necessarily extinguish itself.

'And how do you know,' demanded he, 'that it is so with miss Elizabeth? will she see her lover no more? do they not write to each other?'

'I have forbid her,' answered I, 'to see or write to him; and I am sure of her keeping her word, whatever pain it may give her.'

'Pain!' echoed he, 'oh, yes, doubtless it will give her pain! ah! I feel it; if she loved as I do, and was prohibited seeing and writing to him, no power on earth would make me consent. No, my dear pastor, although I love her as much as—although I am the most unfortunate of men, I would not wish her to be unhappy; whatever grief I experience in learning that she loves another, I suffer much more at the thought of hers. Dear, excellent girl! no, thou must not suffer!'—he put his hand to his forehead, and presented me the other, saying—'farewel, dear pastor, revoke your prohibitions, and when you

shall hear that my heart has ceased—that my life—that I am the most unhappy—that my death—then say to your daughter—' he grasped my hands with violence.—' No, no, tell her nothing, never; her happiness must not be disturbed; when I shall have ceased to love her, and to suffer, then and only then—'

The incoherent energy of his words, and above all, the feeling expression of his countenance, announced the vehemence of his passion. His eyes flashed with a gloomy fire: his color turned from the deepest crimson to the paleness of a spectre; big tears gushed from his eyelids, and rolled down his cheeks.

In vain should I attempt to describe the melting emotion I felt. He wanted to leave me, but I clasped him to my breast, and cried, in the overflowing of my heart—'good young man, do not abandon us! she will be thine; a love so pure, so violent, so sincere, dear Salzman, must become mutual—thou must be happy—I must call thee my son. Elizabeth has no prospect of espousing him she loves; he is a baron, and his relations have all the pride of their rank. They will both perceive the impossibility of their union, and the heart of Elizabeth will know the worth of thine. She will love thee, Salzman, I dare to promise it! my son do not abandon us!'

He seized my hand.

'Well then,' cried he, 'I will come back; but I will not say a word to your daughter of my love, or of your hopes—hopes!—I have none! but at least I shall see her until—'

He embraced me, and we separated. I re-entered the house, and found Elizabeth alone with my wife. I could not hinder myself from exclaiming as I entered—'oh, Elizabeth! what love!—what true sensibility! what a heart! what a soul has that young man!'

At that moment the door opened, and Mina appeared. She was serious; her eyes had still some traces of tears.

She advanced to her sister, who smiled at so unusual a gravity, threw her arms about her neck, and began to sob.

'What ails you, dear Mina?' cried Elizabeth.

Mina pressed her to her heart, and exclaimed—'oh sister! how you are beloved!'

'You have listened then, Mina? you have listened to us? well then, tell, tell your sister what a man—what a heart!'

'The most excellent, the most noble, the best of men!' cried she. 'Oh Elizabeth! how much you are loved!'

She avowed then both that she had listened, and that she had done it purposely, because she mistrusted a little the manner in which I should speak to Salzman.—'But, dear father,' added she, respectfully approaching me, and kissing my hand, 'although I love my sister as much as you can love her, and that our opinions are different, I could not certainly have spoken so well as you; but he, that excellent young man, who could hardly express his noble sentiments—Elizabeth, I protest it was with the greatest difficulty I could keep myself from springing out of my place, and telling him—'my good sister will love you! she must love you!—she loves you already!'

Then we both recounted what had passed, and both with an equal degree of enthusiasm.

Elizabeth listened to us with downcast eyes; she trembled and looked pale, but soon appeared to feel a sentiment of shame at hearing the eulogium of a man with pain, because it was contrary to her interest. She raised her head, and listened to us with firmness, and a sweet smile of approbation.

When we had done, she said, mildly—'I am very unfortunate, my dear father—I am the cause of the un-

happiness of all who love me, and also of this noble-minded man. Ah! what drives me to despair is to be ungrateful for such a generous love. I beseech God,' cried she, falling back a few steps, and joining her uplifted hands, 'yes, I beseech him that the hope you entertain that Wahlen and I may mutually forget each other, may be realized! with what joy would I then make my parents happy, and this virtuous young man! although I renounced it for myself, I would be happy in your happiness! dear father, have patience with your Elizabeth; I fear, ah! I fear that heaven has destined me to rend your hearts! rather may my own soon cease to beat! I am very unfortunate! even my dear Mina too have I now lost!'

'Lost, Eliza!' exclaimed Mina, 'never canst thou lose me; although, I know very well that thou lovest me less than I love thee, my heart is entirely thine, Elizabeth: and I will love thee while I breathe.'

I seized this opportunity to speak strongly to the heart of Elizabeth. My wife, extremely affected at the conduct of Salzman, seconded me. Mina, who always refuted or perplexed my reasonings, held her tongue, and contented herself with fixing her eyes on her sister, and embracing her. It was easy to see by Elizabeth's features what must have been the conflict in her heart; at last she said to me with tolerable firmness—'father, I have long since offered you the sacrifice you demand of me; I do not retract my promise. You tell me Wahlen will forget me, and that I shall forget him. Well, be it so; dear father, if that happen, I may yet be happy: here is my hand, and if it do not happen——ah! may Wahlen at least be happy!—may he at least forget me!—may his heart not endure the pangs!—alas! whatever I do, there will still be some wretched, and it is I who must be the cause. Father, here is my hand.'

'You tremble, sister.' said Mina.

'Would it be a sacrifice.' replied Elizabeth, 'if I did it

without trembling? ah!' cried she, with a more elevated voice, and raising her eyes to heaven, 'may the all-powerful and good God accept and bless the sacrifice of a child to her father, and restore you all to tranquillity! if there must be a heart broken with grief, may he choose mine, and it will be blessing it.'

A shivering seized me at this prayer; I could not bring myself to take the hand she held out toward me. In spite of my system, her love for Wahlen then appeared to me of all other things in the world the most *imperishable*.

'I entreat thee, Elizabeth,' said Augusta, 'my daughter, withdraw thy hand; no, thou must not make this sacrifice!'

'I conjure thee, Eliza,' cried Mina, catching her by the arm, 'do not mind what thy father tells thee; the certainty of thy unhappiness would be enough to kill us.'

'My Elizabeth,' cried I also, 'no, at this moment I do not wish to take thy hand. But let Salzman come; Elizabeth, strive to accustom thyself to his society, regard him as a brother, and leave to nature to decide which of our predictions shall be accomplished; if thou forget Wahlen, and I hope that thou wilt forget him, if thou wert some years without seeing him, then——'

'And then thou wouldest be nineteen or twenty, and perhaps more,' interrupted my wife joyfully, and giving her a kiss upon the cheek.

It was in consequence agreed between us that Salzman should come often to see us, that we should say nothing to him about it, and that we should leave to time to solve this enigma, and restore us to tranquillity.

After a few days Salzman returned, and was received by us all with affection; even Elizabeth herself smiled, and we were all enchanted with his behavior. It would be impossible for a man who had passed his life in the most polished society, to have conducted himself with

more propriety and delicacy. He had not at all the air of distinquishing Elizabeth; he made no allusion, not even the most distant; and if I had not heard some profound sighs issue from his heart whenever she went out, I might have thought him cured. It was Elizabeth's turn that week to take care of the household affairs; she took a natural occasion to tell it to Salzman, in order that he might not suppose her frequent absence was caused by a desire of avoiding him. He chatted a good deal with Mina; he caught her manner so well, and shewed so much refinement of wit, and such a sound, quick judgment, that we were all astonished. Without much acquired talents, or indeed cultivation, it was easy to see that he wanted nothing but a little usage of the world, and facility of expression to be truly amiable. Elizabeth smiled several times, and amused herself with the pleasantries of Mina, who strove so perplex Salzman, but she could not succeed; he always came off with honor by a prompt repartee, which had sometimes so much point, that Mina herself was embarrassed, and then she would laugh, and we along with her.

My wife began a more serious conversation, out of which he drew himself perfectly as well. After having laughed and jested with the daughters, he moralized with the mother without tediousness or pedantry, and still preserving the gaity so becoming at his age. In fine, this good young man carried away the approbation of the whole family.

He continued his visits; and each time we felt the desire that he might become one of our family. His conduct toward Elizabeth was tender and delicate; he did not even permit himself a look that might embarrass her; but without having the air of it, he anticipated her smallest desires, and when she could not perceive him, he looked at nothing but her. If the conversation fell upon love, it was not to her, it was to Mina that he addressed himself, and yet without hinting a word that might be relative to his situation. He did not strive to see her alone,

although he had often an opportunity; in fine, a stranger could never have suspected his love.

I saw, however, how much it cost Salzman to hide his passion from the object of his idolatry. When he thought himself alone, or unobserved, his sighs betrayed him. Sometimes he leaned his forehead upon his hand, and remained a long time absorbed in his sad reflections; at others, on seeing Elizabeth walking in the garden, or hearing the sound of her voice, he would start, and hastily wipe off a tear that hung upon his eyelids.

Mina had heartily protected Wahlen's love, because she believed that her sister could not be happy but with him; because she was herself in a measure the cause, at least of the declaration and promises; because her sister realized one of the novels she took so much pleasure in reading; because, according to them, she believed love to be eternal, and that her sister confirmed it; and because she thought Wahlen what he was in fact—perfectly worthy of being loved. He was the most elegant, the best made, and the most amiable man she had ever seen in her life. She thought that there was not his equal in the world, and she had promised him to be always his friend; he loved her darling sister—she loved and protected Wahlen. Then came Salzman:—she was at first prepossessed against him; but when she had heard the conversation in the garden, and beheld the sublime devotion of a hopeless heart, his generosity, his excessive tenderness for Elizabeth, she judged that the man who was capable of loving thus, was he who merited her most. He appeared to her a thousand times superior to Wahlen, and the sole being upon earth worthy of her sister. In these favorable dispositions, when she had a nearer view of him, she found him as agreeable as he was generous: his countenance pleased her, his conversation delighted her, and his secret grief rendered him still more interesting. At the two only times she had seen Wahlen, that young man being entirely taken up with Elizabeth, paid but little attention to her. Salzman, on the contrary, spoke only to her, was amiable only for her; all that together made an impression upon

an imagination so lively and romantic as that of Mina, and she soon liked him much better than Wahlen. There was so little time required for this change of partiality, that she flattered herself it would be the same with her sister. She perceived, however, at the end of some time, that Elizabeth did not see as she did, or rather that she shewed but little attention for Salzman, and felt nothing for him beyond the coldest esteem. She resolved, therefore, to neglect nothing to make her sister acknowledge her favorite's merit, and force her, in some measure, to do him justice. 'If she but knew him as well as I do,' thought she, 'Elizabeth would surely love him.'

From that motive sprung her particular attention to listen to all he said, to study every thing he did, to catch his ideas, to make him appear in the most advantageous light, to read in his soul, and thus engrave his image in her own; while she believed her solicitude was owing merely to the desire she felt of speaking of him to her sister, for the purpose of disposing her to love him. She talked of him unceasingly; sometimes with enthusiasm; sometimes with pity, but always with a sentiment of admiration and tenderness which augmented every day.

Elizabeth, who in secret rendered justice to Salzman, and did not like to contradict, approved or was silent; and Mina frequently thought she had persuaded her, because she thought it impossible to see Salzman, and not love him. How then could she resist the desire of consoling him? she gave him hopes, therefore, which she thought founded, or on the point of being so; she wept with him, and then told him, smiling—'we shall soon be happy.'

Salzman, who from delicacy, and to adhere to his system, had never spoken to her openly of his attachment for Elizabeth, seeing however such a decided protectress in Mina, and that she discovered so much friendship, so much compassion, at last unburdened himself to her with the most unreserved confidence during a walk they were

taking together, and painted his sentiment with a glowing warmth, which caught the heart of poor Mina, already too well prepared to receive the impression by her novel reading, and the contemplation of that of her sister, which had so long been the continual object of her thought.

Salzman spoke of his love, and of the misfortune of not being able to excite a return, with a sort of despair. Mina, affected beyond all expression, strove to console him by the most tender methods she could imagine. She set no bounds to the hopes she gave him of being beloved by Elizabeth!—whether she really thought so, or that love, under the veil of compassion, made her take a pleasure in telling Salzman—'you are beloved,' she repeated it to him a thousand times, and succeeded at length in changing his fears into hopes, and his hopes into certitude. The tears of grief then became the tears of joy.

'Oh! can it be possible?' cried he; 'am I destined to supreme felicity? Mina, my dear Mina, tell me, repeat to me that I am loved, that I am to be the happiest of men!' and he pressed her hand with ardor to his burning lips.

The imprudent girl, rejoiced at his happiness, confirmed it to him; she called him her brother, her dear, her beloved brother. Salzman at this was no longer master of his transports.

'Oh my sister!' cried he, and he pressed her in his arms.

Each of them at this moment thought only of Elizabeth: and yet the embrace was both tenderer and more prolonged than it should have been between brother and sister. Mina resembled Elizabeth; and perhaps Salzman had an instant of illusion. Mina perhaps thought for an instant that she was the so much-loved Elizabeth, or rather Mina thought nothing, had not an idea, not a reflection, and felt only that she would have given her life to render Salzman happy. The innocent creature exclaimed, while she returned his caresses—'oh my Elizabeth! how much I love thee! and how much I will

love thee still more when thou shalt have given me Salzman for a brother!'

This fatal walk augmented considerably both her affection for Salzman, and her desire to see him happy at any price. She hoped most ardently that Elizabeth would realize the encouragement she had given her friend.

'He will think I have deceived him,' thought she; he will no longer have any friendship for me!' and her heart recoiled at the idea.

She recommenced his panegyric that very evening with more earnestness than ever. Oh! how was it that we did not then remark the expression of her look, the suffusion of her cheeks, her trembling voice, and the feeling vivacity of her language! A hundred times since have we recollected that evening; yes, we ought to have seen that it was not friendship which expressed itself thus, and that every one of Mina's words was dictated by love.

'Thou alone, Elizabeth,' said she to her sister, 'thou only canst make him happy; thou alone of all the world deservest that heart which thou rejectest. Oh! if he loved not thee, whom could he love? my very soul revolts at the idea of his having any other wife but thee. I think not of his fortune; were he the poorest of men, it must be happiness itself to share his toils and his poverty! how happy art thou, Elizabeth, to have at thy disposal the happiness of such a man!'

The two sisters frequently drew comparisons between Salzman and Wahlen; but in these conversations Mina had generally the apparent advantage. She extolled Salzman, and lowered Wahlen. Elizabeth defended Wahlen, but allowed Salzman his ample degree of merit. She considered Mina unjust toward Wahlen, and loved him the more.

'Confess,' said she to her one day, 'that Wahlen is more polished, and better informed.'

Mina. 'He should thank God for it, his tutor, and the world. Salzman in his simplicity has more energy, and

that is something for a man: what he is, he owes only to himself. How noble is his conduct! what magnanimity! —what delicacy, Eliza!'

Elizabeth. 'Wahlen speaks much better.'

Mina. 'Like a book, and Salzman like a man: he finds expressions in his heart, and Wahlen in his wit.'

Elizabeth. 'How well Wahlen writes!'

Mina. 'Yes, his style is more correct I allow; but Salzman has more natural ease. Hold, Eliza! read this note I received from him this morning.'

'Extremely well,' said Elizabeth, returning the note to Mina; 'and it is astonishing that a man in his situation should have improved himself so much. But, Minette, do you read, I prithee, this letter from Wahlen;—what generosity!—what sensibility!'

'Ah!' replied Mina, laughing, 'it is from the *lover* to his mistress—it is quite different, Eliza, from a simple note from friend to friend; but Salzman will write you some of that kind too perhaps, and then we shall see.'

'But read,' said Elizabeth.

'Mina took the letter and read. At one passage she smiled with an air of satisfaction, and cried—'I hope he does not brag, and that he will be as good as his word.'

'What part is that you remark, Mina?'

'This passage; listen:—

'I feel, my dear Elizabeth, all I owe you for the noble confidence with which you avowed to me that I was beloved; but I should be unworthy of that confidence and of the happiness of being loved by Elizabeth, if I were ever capable of abusing it.

'I am yours, Elizabeth, I am yours for life, and nothing can break the tie that unites me to you, since it is bound by all that is most sacred to a virtuous heart. You love me I am convinced—you have let me read it in your artless heart; but there may happen such an event, such a circumstance as would make you regret that avowal, and wish you had never known me. Elizabeth! to see you happy is the first of my wishes; to be happy along with you my heart desires unceasingly, but that is subordinate to the other. Oh, mayest thou, beloved maid! always find thy happiness in our mutual love, and in our fidelity! but if it were otherwise, if that cruel day should come when you would be happier in forgetting me, recollect, Elizabeth, that you are free, and that my first desire is to see you happy. I tell you that, my beloved, because our situations are different: I have no other bond, no other master but love; I have neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister—nothing that can hinder me from being eternally yours. You, on the contrary, you depend on all these relations, and love at least should leave you the liberty to dispose of yourself: I only demand of my Elizabeth to be happy, and to tell me always the truth such as it is in her heart. If that heart should cease to be mine, I should lament it most sincerely; but never, never would mine cease to be yours as long as I exist: I would not trouble the felicity of my Elizabeth—I would not make her the slightest reproach. I write this with a trembling hand, but with a firmly decided resolution. If what I foresee happen, Elizabeth, and that it hurt you too much to pronounce my sentence, you will only have to send me back this letter; it contains my desire, my resolutions, and your justification, and I will, I hope, be a man.

'You will ask me what induces me to speak to you thus? it is yourself, Elizabeth—it is my desire to know you happy—it is to spare your heart painful conflicts if your family, which is but too probable, should think of establishing you—it is because I love you, Elizabeth, more for yourself than for my own sake.'

'Well?' demanded Elizabeth, drying her eyes.

'Well,' replied Mina, 'I approve it much, and every man should speak in the same manner. Oh my sister! my Elizabeth! how happy mayest thou render us all!—how happy wilt thou be thyself! it is precisely the circumstance he has foreseen; the most complete felicity offers itself to thee—do not reject it. Gracious providence! how man sports with the happiness of his whole life! look, read it again. Does not Wahlen himself tell thee that *the first of his wishes is to see thee happy?* and how happy wilt thou not be! Put a cover to that letter, Eliza, send it back to Wahlen, and the first of his wishes will be fulfiled; thou wilt be the happiest woman, and I the happiest girl upon earth.'

'And that generosity,' cried Elizabeth with emotion, 'shall it be thus recompensed?'

'What generosity, Eliza? is it permitting you to be happy, and to confer happiness on another, when it is impossible you can make him so? indeed! that is magnanimous; but if you suppose you owe so much gratitude to Wahlen, what do you not owe to Salzman, who has offered to my father the half of his property to render you happy with Wahlen? if Wahlen merit thy love for his generosity, what wilt thou give Salzman for a generosity beyond all precedent?—a cold compassion!—a sign of pity! ah Elizabeth! Elizabeth!'

'A heart penetrated with esteem, Mina—ready to sacrifice to him all its hopes of happiness; and if your wishes be accomplished, if I become his wife, fidelity and unbounded confidence. But, dear Mina, do not increase my sorrow and incertitude; my mind is but too much tortured already. I love Wahlen. It is for God alone to tell which is the most noble and the most generous! It is not he whom I ought to prefer—it is he to whom I have given my heart, and plighted my faith. Mina, render me unhappy if you will, but do not render me per-

jured. A pure and faithful heart is at present the only good that is left me—ah! leave it me still.'

Insensibly these attacks made an impression upon the mind of Elizabeth. Salzman came continually to our house, and was always received with the most unequivocal friendship and intimate confidence. He did us several little services, which, taken together, were great obligations, and merited all our gratitude. The good and sensible Elizabeth could not refuse her friendship to him whom we all cherished; she demonstrated it to him a thousand ways, and treated him like a beloved brother.

The crisis Wahlen had supposed, had arrived. Touched with the passion of Salzman, overcome by our importunities, Elizabeth declared at different times to her sister that she could have wished she had met Salzman before Wahlen. Her confidence for him increased gradually; she went often to walk with him, what she used not to do before. Mina showed me the letter by which Wahlen permitted Elizabeth to marry another. I thanked heaven to see every thing concur toward this desirable event, and we were all happy, at least I thought so.

However, Mina, the volatile Mina, whose vivacity enlivened us all, became all on a sudden serious, or rather of a very uneven temper. She would pass in a moment from the most gloomy sadness to the most extravagant mirth; and this mirth had such a singular air, it seemed so forced, that we were all struck with it. Often, after having chatted cheerfully as usual, she would become silent, capricious, and sometimes even peevish. When we asked her what was the matter with her, she would reply by a burst of laughter, which amazed us; and more than once her sister found her in tears.

We strove to divine the cause of this strange conduct, but not one of us could imagine what it might be. In spite of all her efforts to hide her ill-humor, it broke out

sometimes with such violence, that I felt myself constrained to make her some reproaches.

Alas! the poor girl loved; she loved Salzman with all the fervor of her impassioned soul—she had loved him without suspecting it. The treacherous passion had glided into, and increased in her heart under the guise of attachment for her sister. Her wishes, her hopes, all her dreams of happiness had Salzman for their object; she identified herself in idea with Elizabeth, she had formed a project of living along with her, and never marrying; but she was ignorant that to live along with Salzman was the real, though secret wish of her heart. The excessive praise, the enthusiasm with which she spoke of him, had confirmed the impression made at first by admiration at his nobleness of sentiment; she felt that there was no happiness for her but in seeing him, and in seeing him happy; and as he could not be so without Elizabeth, as that was the only means of not separating from him, she did all she could to engage her sister to marry him, but she knew not the anguish she was preparing herself. When she saw Elizabeth become more affectionate toward Salzman, she then perceived with affright that he was lost for her; he had no longer eyes nor ears but for her sister. What she had so often anticipated with delight and inexpressible emotion was now realizing: she went to walk with Elizabeth and Salzman, and the happiness she had so long desired, proved nothing but a torment; she was no longer of any consequence—the happy Elizabeth was every thing for him. She would then quit his arm in a movement of vexation, and stay behind. Salzman never noticed it. She then returned pensively to his side; and if Elizabeth remained behind in her turn, Salzman, uneasy and absent, slackened his pace, and turned his head continually, without hearing a word of what Mina said to him: all his faculties were concentered in his eyes. She would then feel unutterable misery, and call him ingrate in the bottom of her heart.

When she was alone in her chamber, all that had

passed retraced itself to her memory. Every thing down to the merest trifle that evinced Salzman's love—she had remarked all: the flush of his countenance whenever Eliza spoke to him, and his trembling when perchance he touched her hand, and his tender passionate look. Then would the burning tears flow from poor Mina's eyes. Without daring to acknowledge it to herself, her heart was corroded by jealousy, and she spent the night in retracing these distracting images, until they were obscured by a few instants of sleep; she would rise up afterward with a weight upon her heart, which she strove in vain to dissipate. She would often join us at breakfast singing and laughing; but this fictitious gaiety soon vanished when she heard us speak of the extreme fondness of Salzman for Elizabeth. When he entered, she would sorrowfully follow his looks, which sought but Elizabeth; and if at that moment that formerly so much-beloved sister spoke to him with an obliging air, Mina felt a sort of bitterness against her; she felt it with horror, but she felt it, and perceived it: and when at last Salzman approached her, and saluted her with a look and a tone of voice so different, it seemed to her as if she hated him; an involuntary terror seized her as at the approach of a monster; she wished to fly, and yet she staid, and her tortured soul drank deep at the poisoned source of jealousy and hopeless love.

In fine, it was no longer possible to practise illusion upon herself. She knew that she loved Salzman, and that what she had so long taken for the gentle warmth of friendship, was become the devouring flame of love; she felt it, and she shuddered.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The dream.

In this dreadful state of mind, poor Mina's strength and resolution became entirely exhausted;—her health was injured; at every moment she passed from the most feverish heat to the coldness of ice. At last her sufferings became so intense, that the dread of losing entirely the little reason she had left, determined her to unbosom herself to her sister. She went to find her in their bed-chamber. Elizabeth was sitting in silence at a little table, leaning her forehead on her hand. She sighed; Mina sighed also, and got into an obscure corner behind her sister's chair, to conceal her trouble and confusion.

'Mina!' exclaimed Elizabeth, without changing her attitude, and sighed again.

'Eliza!' responded Mina with a trembling voice, and sighing still more profoundly, and both remained silent.

Mina was at a loss for expressions, and striving to recall them to mind.

'Ah dear sister!' cried Elizabeth, letting fall the hand which supported her head, 'could you believe it? what happens to me is so extraordinary, my own heart is an enigma to me; I love Wahlen, and——and yet to day——Salzman——I know not how, but I——I have just this moment told him——oh Mina! how contented you will be! yes, I have just given him hopes of being loved.'

Mina felt herself ready to faint. She joined her

hands upon her breast, and even this slight motion required the exertion of all her strength.

After a long pause, during which the two sisters did not once look at each other, Mina, with a trembling feeble, almost inarticulate voice, said at last—'you love him then really?'

She was silent again, and an enormous load of grief weighed upon her oppressed heart.

'Yes, really I love him,' replied Elizabeth, hesitating a little.

And these words completed the agony of poor Mina. She strove to hide her pale face with her hand; she was unable even to raise it, or to pronounce a single word.

'For a long time,' continued Elizabeth, 'my heart has felt all the worth of his; but to-day—to-day—could I deny it him? no, Mina, no! you cannot form an idea of his love, of his delicacy; never did any man love like him! I perceive at present, Mina, I see the truth of what you have told me so often, that heaven has intended him for me, and that his heart, his temper, his station in life are precisely what are necessary for my happiness. Even did Wahlen remove all difficulties, did he marry me with the consent of all his family, I could not be happy: a title, riches, luxurious dissipation and splendor are neither suitable to my simple taste nor to my timid disposition. A farm, and a husband, plain like myself, who knows like me how to enjoy quiet happiness, will answer me much better than a superb drawing-room, where I should feel myself displaced. Wahlen also was formed for a tranquil life, but his rank prevents it. Yes, Mina, I have dearly loved Wahlen, and I love him still; but his fortune and his name have always made me tremble. Now that I know I shall remain in the station in which I was born, and of which I have the habits, my heart is more at its ease, more free; I tremble only for the moment when I shall put a direction and seal to that letter to send it him, for it needs

must at present——ah my sister! my sister! thou, the friend of Salzman, comfort my heart—tell me I am happy, that I may believe myself to be so.'

She rose up, pressed her glowing lips to the icy cheek of Mina, and clasped her to her heart, saying—'Mina, answer me, shall I be happy?'

These tender caresses drew the unfortunate girl from the torpitude of woe into which she was plunged.

'Art thou content with me?' repeated Elizabeth, 'and will thy Eliza be happy?'

'Thou art happy,' answered Mina faintly, 'nobody better than I knows how happy thou art.'

Prompted by affectionate confidence, Elizabeth leaned upon her sister, and whispered, embracing her—'it is to thee alone, dear Mina, that I have opened my heart.'

'And to him?' said Mina, with dissembled calmness.

'No, no, Mina, I have disclosed my sentiments to him only by a look, a smile, and pressing his hand; but to thee my avowal is entire as it is voluntary. And you assure me, Mina, that I shall be happy?'

Mina.—'Oh! happy!—happy, Elizabeth!'

Elizabeth.—'Are you all so—are you happy? is my Mina content? shall I see these clouds dissipate?' said she, laying her hand on Mina's eyes.

At that question Mina hung down her head, and replied slowly—'yes—all——'

She could articulate nothing more.

'Ah!' cried Eliza, with a mingled expression of joy

and fortitude, 'I want no more; it is all settled—I will no longer think but of rendering you all happy: all gloominess will clear up, all sorrow will be cured! yes, I shall be happy, Mina; thou wilt witness it, and it is to thy prudent advice I shall owe it.'

At this Mina pressed her arm with a convulsive movement, which her sister took for a caress.

'Oh! no! no!' cried she, turning away, 'no!—me! —witness it!—oh! oh!'

'Mina,' cried Elizabeth, in amazement, 'thou wilt not witness my happiness! but what is the matter with you?—gracious heaven! I only now perceive how pale you are! what ails thee, dear Mina?'

'It is that,' said Mina, 'it is that I wanted to say: my health—that paleness—ah! can it appear beside countenances beaming with love and health? be happy, Elizabeth; thou wilt be so most certainly, I know it—I desire it; but Mina will not witness it.'

Elizabeth then conjured her sister, with the most earnest entreaties, to tell her the cause of her despondency. Mina knew no longer how to resist her; already had one or two words escaped her that might throw some light upon, and betray her fatal secret—already Elizabeth, with the tone of surprize and affright, had cried out—'oh Mina! dear Mina! could it be!'

Now that her sister loved Salzman, that she had told her so, that she had consented to marry him, the most dreadful torments would not have forced Mina to confess her passion; she saw that she had not an instant to lose to extricate herself in some manner, and give her sister a plausible reason for her grief and emotion, which might cover the real one. She endeavored, therefore, to compose herself, and invent something of

a terrifying nature which might account for her weakness. After a few seconds of reflection, she advanced toward Elizabeth.

'Listen,' said she, 'since you will know it. One night, between sleeping and waking, I am not sure whether it were a dream or an apparition, but I saw my angel guardian.'

'You saw him, Mina? you were dreaming sure?'

'I saw him, Eliza—believe it, I did see him: he was beautiful, and crowned with roses; he smiled, and stretched his hands over my head, as if to bless me; my heart palpitated with sweet emotion. Ah Eliza! how happy I was! suddenly I perceived the roses of his crown wither one after another, his celestial countenance grew pale and livid as death, and the *hand of blessing* withdraw, while he regarded me with an ill-boding, gloomy look, that petrified my very soul. He said to me—

'Poor girl, I pity thee! how unhappy art thou doomed to be! I abandon thee for ever!'

'And he vanished in the most profound darkness. Ah sister! I feel it, nothing can efface the impression of those terible words; I think I hear them continually—I think I see my angel guardian abandoning me for ever, and my heart oppressed——'

She ceased, and leaned her face upon Elizabeth's shoulder.

'Dear little visionary,' cried Elizabeth to her, striving to smile, 'a dream, and less than a dream, an illusion of thy imagination causes the state in which I see thee—ah, Mina, Mina!'

'Listen,' said Mina, lowering her trembling voice, 'that is not all. A frightful abyss opened before me, and it was into this abyss that my angel guardian precipitated himself—it is there I saw him fall, and disappear. Above me the firmament shone still in all its glory; suns, moons, innumerable worlds; I beheld them with admira-

tion, and hope began to reanimate my heart. But, lo one sun after another, one moon after another, and star after star detached themselves from the sky, and fell successively into this abyss, and soon the whole creation became annihilated: I alone remained—alone in the world, involved in total obscurity. Then I heard a dismal voice issue from the depth of the abyss, which cried to me—'and thou also, thou must fall, thou wilt became annihilated: it is here that all must end; there will be no more awakening in nature, no more morning for Mina.'—'Thou wilt pass like thy guardian angel!' said a consoling milder voice. At that moment I felt myself vanish like a breath of wind, which passes and disappears without leaving a trace. Oh my Elizabeth! thy Mina is lost for ever!—soon will she disappear, and be annihilated for ever!'

This terrible image of destruction and abandonment was really that of poor Mina's heart, and under the veil of allegory she had told her sister the sad truth.

Frightened herself at this picture of her situation, fearing to be conjectured, dubious of elucidating it any farther, she stopped in confusion, and covered her face with her hands; but Elizabeth relieved her from her embarrassment by exclaiming with terror—'ah, unhappy girl! I comprehend thee—thou doubtest the immortality of thy soul.'

She clasped her at the same time in her trembling arms to her sympathizing heart, and told her a thouand reasons to prove the certainty of another life, and recall her faith.

Mina was not sorry that her sister had fallen into a mistake, and that she attributed her grief to a cause extremely remote from the true one, and specious enough according to the purport of the dream she had supposed. She did not oppose the reasons adduced by Elizabeth, but listened to them in silence; and when she was done, only told her sorrowfully—'I am unhappy, very unhappy, and you may believe me nothing can alleviate my pain.'

They both went to bed weeping; but Mina's tears were rendered less bitter by the consideration that she had now a pretext for her sadness, and that her secret was in safety.

The next morning I was the happiest of men. On quitting us the evening before, Salzman seemed so contented, and took leave of my wife and me with such expressions of tenderness, that I was convinced the young people were at last on a good footing, and that he would soon be my son.

How presumptious is man, and how prompt to make a merit of success! I believed that I owed this entirely to the sagacity with which I had conducted the affair; and this was not the least of my joy.

When Elizabeth entered, she was pale, dejected, and her eyes swoln with tears. Her look was freezing; she seemed to have something on her mind which she wished to communicate to me. My heart palpitated, and I said to her, trembling—'Elizabeth you have some ill news to tell us.'

'The worst of all,' cried she, 'the greatest misfortune that could befall us. Mina, our dear Mina—'

She advanced, and whispered to me that she wished to speak with me alone. I led her to a corner of the room, and waited with anxiety for what she had to tell me.

'Mina,' said she to me, trembling, 'ah, my father! I fear for her reason!—that secret melancholy proceeds from the mind; the unhappy child doubts of the immortality of her soul—she does not believe in another life!'

I recovered a little from the panic caused by her looks and the first words she had uttered, not certainly that I thought the evil a slight one—for can there be a greater? but because i thought that it would be easy to apply a remedy to it. I desired the children to go out. My wife approached us to know what it was, and Eliza recounted the conversation of the preceding night, and the gloomy

despair of her sister. My good wife bemoaned that the greatest misfortunes she could imagine, happened to her daughters—to the one by the loss of her heart—to the other by the loss of her reason. For my part I was profoundly occupied in seeking for the most convincing arguments to prove the immortality of the soul, and particularly such as were likely to make the most impression upon my poor girl. Charles ran to fetch his *Cicero's Tusculans* upon the contempt of death. He asked Elizabeth—'But what reasons does she give?' and looking proudly at his book—'here,' said he, 'you can find every answer.'

'It gives none,' cried Elizabeth, sorrowfully.

'None!' repeated Charles. 'Did any person ever believe or disbelieve without motives? that is not possible.'

'Ah, Charles,' replied Elizabeth, 'nothing is more possible. When I have been in the garden on a fine night in spring, and the starry vault of heaven reflected its million lustres above my head, and the nightingale sung in the shade, and my heart throbbed with ineffable delight, ah! I was then much better convinced of the existence of a God than by all our lessons.'

'What proofs! a nightingale singing, and a heart palpitating!' retorted Charles, laughing.

'Oh,' rejoined Elizabeth, elevating her looks to heaven, 'if a nightingale, full of love for its young, which sings to cheer its companion on the nest, and a human heart which sympathizes in that love, and admires it, be not proofs of the existence of a universal father, there are none; be assured of it, Charles, that if such a sentiment do not revive faith in the heart of Mina, all thy books will be of no avail, however good they may be.'

'Reason and feeling should go together, dear Elizabeth,' observed I; 'it is the head and the heart united which are the guides of faith.'

'Father,' replied she, 'I only wanted to save Mina from the frozen arguments of Charles. I know it by my own experience; if he go with his dry methodical way to tell her 'this is like that, therefore it is the same,' she is lost. Ah! it is not in that manner we must penetrate her susceptible heart. A tear, a caress, an invocation of the creator will have more effect upon her than the reasonings of the best theologians. Father, I beseech you do not let Charles speak to Mina!'

It seemed as if she apprehended that I also intended to speak to her in the same manner as Charles.

'Elizabeth,' said I, 'what must we then do with this poor girl?'

'Manage her with delicacy, redouble our tenderness toward her, and then a ray of hope may pass through her heart to enlighten her mind: a dream, a nothing has robbed her of tranquillity; her confidence in us, and our attachment to her, will restore it.'

CHAP. XXIX.

Grief and fortitude.

It was forbidden Charles to let Mina perceive that he knew her secret; my wife and I resolved to do the same, and to leave to Elizabeth the care of beginning the conversion of her sister. In fine appeared our pretended sceptic. She complained of head-ach, lassitude, and palpitations, which impeded her respiration. We listened

to her with commiseration; my wife, however, discovered some signs of discontent, for notwithstanding her tenderness for Mina, as she had never doubted the truths of religion herself, she thought it impossible to do so without some ill intention; but the spectacle of her child, mute and trembling, not daring to lift her eyes, and who appeared sinking under the weight of her fault, converted to pity all the clouds of displeasure that had lowered on her countenance.

Elizabeth had not told her sister that she had informed us of the cause of her sadness, so we did not speak of any thing that related to it; but it was easy for her to perceive that we knew something of it, by the manner in which we pronounced the words *death, tomb, soul, eternity*. She soon quitted the table, unable to restrain her tears, and her sister followed her. We all rose up; not one of us could eat. I went into my chamber, and shut myself up. I sought every book that might aid me to cure the sick mind of my daughter, although I had no great hopes of succeeding by these means. I took up Cicero upon the contempt of death; I read it and shook my head; never had I been less satisfied with the arguments of philosophers in favor of immortality. I fell upon this passage—'*If death be followed by annihilation, it is not an evil?*'—and it made me shudder.

While I was perusing those pretended doctors of the mind, Elizabeth had begun the cure of her sister in a very opposite and much better manner, if her melancholy had sprung from the cause she supposed; but for the true one, it was good for nothing. She had led her to the little wood, and had not said one word to her about the immortality of the soul; but had made her remark all the riches and beauty of the autumn. Mina followed her pensively, letting her imagination wander, and observing nothing but the fallen leaves, the withered flowers, and the decay of nature. Elizabeth could not help weeping. Mina fell on her neck, and conjured her to have some indulgence for her, and pity her weakness.—Elizabeth returned her endearments. They sat down at

the foot of a beech, upon a bank of turf, with their hands entwined, and Eliza began to speak of their childhood, of their little plays in that very grove, which awakened sweet recollections in the soul of Mina, and even made her smile; she then spoke of their intimate union, of the attachment, the predilection they had always for one another. Mina pressed her to her heart, and Eliza said in giving her a kiss—'dost thou recollect a single dispute between us Mina, that has lasted more than one quarter of an hour? and dost thou remember, Mina, how we have always had the same inclinations—what the one loved, the other loved also?'

Mina let fall her head upon her bosom; a gloom of sadness darkened her features anew; she replied faintly, 'yes.'

Then Elizabeth, laughing, reminded her of a thousand circumstances of their first years, when they used continually to make each other little sacrifices. Mina sighed.

'Alas!' reflected she, 'I make thee sacrifices still—I sacrifice to thee my happiness, my heart, and my life; and thou dost not know it—thou shalt know it never.'

'And it will be always the same,' continued Elizabeth, embracing her; 'will it not, dear Mina? fate, the tomb, and eternity will always find us united, partaking together both sorrows and good fortune.'

Elizabeth began afterward with a serene look to describe the life they should lead together when she should have married Salzman.

'It is that, above all, which has determined me in his favor,' said she; 'it is the picture of happiness you have held out to me so often; it is the idea of not separating from thee. I accused thee of pressing me too much for Salzman: but now I thank thee.'

Poor Mina suffered the utmost anguish; her heart was rending; she hid her face on her sister's bosom. At last, unable any longer to support a conversation, of

which each word was a dagger to her, she cried, in a low voice—'I prithee make haste, do not delay thy marriage, that I may behold it; I shall be more tranquil if I leave you happy.'

Elizabeth promised it to her, pressing her to her heart to conceal the impression made on her by those words. Not that she thought her sister in the least danger; she attributed this idea to her melancholy; but that very melancholy drove her to despair. Poor Elizabeth herself was far enough from the serenity she affected. Although Salzman had in reality touched her heart by the extraordinary force and disinterestedness of his passion, Whalen was far from being forgotten; and, spite of all her efforts not to think of him, his image recurred but too often, and especially in this grove, witness of their mutual declaration, where they had vowed love and fidelity; but persuaded that Mina desired ardently that she should marry Salzman, she took a definitive resolution; and, to remove all ideas of its being a sacrifice, she affected much more tenderness for Salzman than she felt. Mina then thought that she loved him, and became more resolved than ever to withhold her secret from her.

They both returned to the house dejected, worn out with the sacrifices they were mutually making each other, and their efforts to conceal them; so true it is that, without confidence, the most sincere and exalted friendship may prove nothing but a torment. Mina, with an incredible strength of mind, took the resolution, since Elizabeth did love Salzman, to confine to her own bosom the passion she felt, if she could not vanquish it, and to smile over her wretchedness. From the very next morning she looked quite different. When she awoke, she spoke thus to her sister:—

'Eliza, my good genius is returned. I saw him last night. The roses of his garland were fresher and more beautiful than ever; he divided them with me and shewing me the heavens glittering with stars, told me—

"I will quit thee no more; behold whither I shall conduct thee."—He laid his hand upon my heart, and I felt it instantly lightened, I gave you the finest of my roses, Eliza; you took it, and we were both happy.'

Elizabeth embraced her with transport, and both came down stairs. The satisfied look of my eldest daughter, and Mina's calmness, struck me at once: the former made me a sign to intimate that her sister was recovered, and after breakfast took the first opportunity to mention to me what Mina had told her. My heart swam in joy; I had regained all my tranquillity; my inquietudes had dissipated like the vapors of morning. However, now that the heart of my daughter was cured, I thought it was the moment to effect the cure of her head likewise, and convince her by cool reasoning. I took her therefore in private, and said to her with tenderness—'Mina, I know the cause of thy melancholy.'

She turned pale, and took my hand trembling.

'Elizabeth,' continued I, 'has told me a dream——'

'Ah!' cried she, coming to herself, but with a serious air, 'I am very glad that she—that she has told it you.'

This appeared to me a happy auspice for the sermon I was about to preach, and I began with great earnestness and method to endoctrine her. She soon interrupted me.

'Oh my dear father!' cried she, 'when you press me to your bosom, when you bless your daughter, what more does she want? what more do you ask for her? endless happiness!—the benediction of my father is the assurance and the pledge of it.'

I embraced her, crying out in a transport of parental affection—'dear child! may God console and strengthen thy heart!'

Salzman now hardly ever quitted the house, nor his Elizabeth, to whom he now talked perpetually of his passion. Mina had the courage to hear it; she sat down near them, and appeared tranquil; but as soon as Salzman was gone, would entreat her sister to conclude the marriage. Elizabeth promised it, and then upon different pretexts would put off the moment, and thus protracted Mina's sufferings, who in her despair wished for the conclusion of this event, as a criminal does the finishing *stroke of pity*. I would willingly have joined her to press Eliza, but my wife was continually talking of her youth, and said that each day's delay was so much gained. I lost my time in opposing this prejudice; it was too deep rooted. I always reckoned Elizabeth's age up to the next year, my wife only to that which was compleated—that at the present moment she was twenty according to my account, eighteen by her mother's and nineteen in reality.

Mina assumed more ease before us every day; she had almost all her wonted gaity without her petulancy; she smiled often, and spoke little. We attributed this change to the progress of her understanding, while it was owing, in fact, to the sublimest fortitude; but the continuity of this effort was silently undermining the principal of life: every night stole a petal from the roses of her cheeks, and extinguished a sparkle of her eyes Salzman at length remarked it; he communicated his apprehensions to us, and we spoke seriously to her about it. She redoubled her efforts to impose upon us by a feigned serenity; she was convinced that she was going rapidly to the tomb; it was her only desire, and this idea inspired her with strength, and even a sort of content which rendered her task more easy. Elizabeth also was growing pale, and visibly declining; it was we who remarked it to Salzman. When he spoke to her about it, she alledged the inquietude her sister's situation gave her. I had not in my life spent such a sorrowful winter; I felt the presentiment of a thousand misfortunes, and my wife also never ceased

saying to me, 'how glad I should be, my dear, if this winter were over.'

I pressed Elizabeth then to conclude; she promised, and sighed. Salzman pressed her also; Mina smiled, and continued to pine away.

The last day of the year drew nigh; none of our children ventured even to think of their accustomed presents; they all knew we had nothing. The coach had been long since sold for the half of what it had cost, and the money was laid out on indispensable purchases. Often did my thoughts turn with grief to the manner in which this Sylvester's evening was to pass, which had been always in my family an epoch of joy and happiness. One of my children was visibly sinking to the tomb; another was going to give her hand to a man chosen by us, and not by her heart; no resource, our hopes destroyed, absolute poverty, a miserable future, such only were the presents I had in my power to offer my poor wife.

On christmas eve I was sitting sorrowfully beside a table, on which were four lighted candles, and in the middle a little tree, * hung with trifles for our youngest children, which their sisters, even the dying Mina, had sit up to make during three or four cold nights, that they might not see them. The three poor little things were at first quite joyful, until they perceived my sadness. Each of them taking away their little present, put out one of the lights, so that only one was left. I was sad, very sad indeed; the decline of Mina, and the perceptible anguish of Elizabeth tortured my soul.

'Ah!' said I, sighing, and stretching out my hand to my wife, 'where, Augusta, are the contented looks and the cries of joy we used to hear about us on this day? st. Sylvester is coming, and I do not behold one satisfied face.'

* It is the custom in Germany to suspend the christmas gifts of children to the branches of a little fir, illuminated on that occasion, and placed in the middle of the room.

Elizabeth rose up, and came to embrace me, striving to smile. From this instant she was determined, but she waited that day, in order that I might then see at least one happy face. She told Salzman to come on st. Sylvester's evening, but to remain in the court until she made him a sign to enter, and he promised to obey. When she retired to her chamber with her sister, she examined all Wahlen's letters, took the last, folded it under a cover, put a wafer to it, and took the seal. Tears overflowed in her eyes—she hesitated—laid the packet upon the table—retook it, and laid it down again. Mina observed all her motions.

'What are you doing, Eliza?' demanded she in a feeble voice.

'I am going——I must write the superscription of this letter; Mina, you know very well what letter I mean. Oh Mina! I——'

She raised her eyes, and saw her sister struggling against a swoon. She sprung to give her assistance, took her in her arms, and tried all the means in her power, or that her imagination could invent. Mina recovered and, pressing her sister's hand, told her with a melancholy smile—'it is nothing, Eliza; do not be alarmed—it goes and comes, and will go again. You must accustom yourself to it—you will see it often; but I shall recover, and we shall be all happy.'

Elizabeth had been seized with a universal tremor; she was longer in coming to herself than Mina. She took up her packet of letters; but when she would have written the direction, she found it was impossible.

'Mina,' said she to her sister, 'write this address, I entreat you; my emotion is still too violent—I cannot—the pen falls from my hand.'

Mina went to the table, took the pen, and wrote the address with firmness, although she considered it the

seal of her misfortune. She then went out; she wanted to be alone, to weep at liberty. She got, with much difficulty, as far as the garden. The clearness of a night in the month of December, the brilliant stars of winter, the sight of nature, still, frozen, inanimate, and yet beautiful and tranquil, calmed her spirits, and she soon returned to her sister with a smile upon her countenance.

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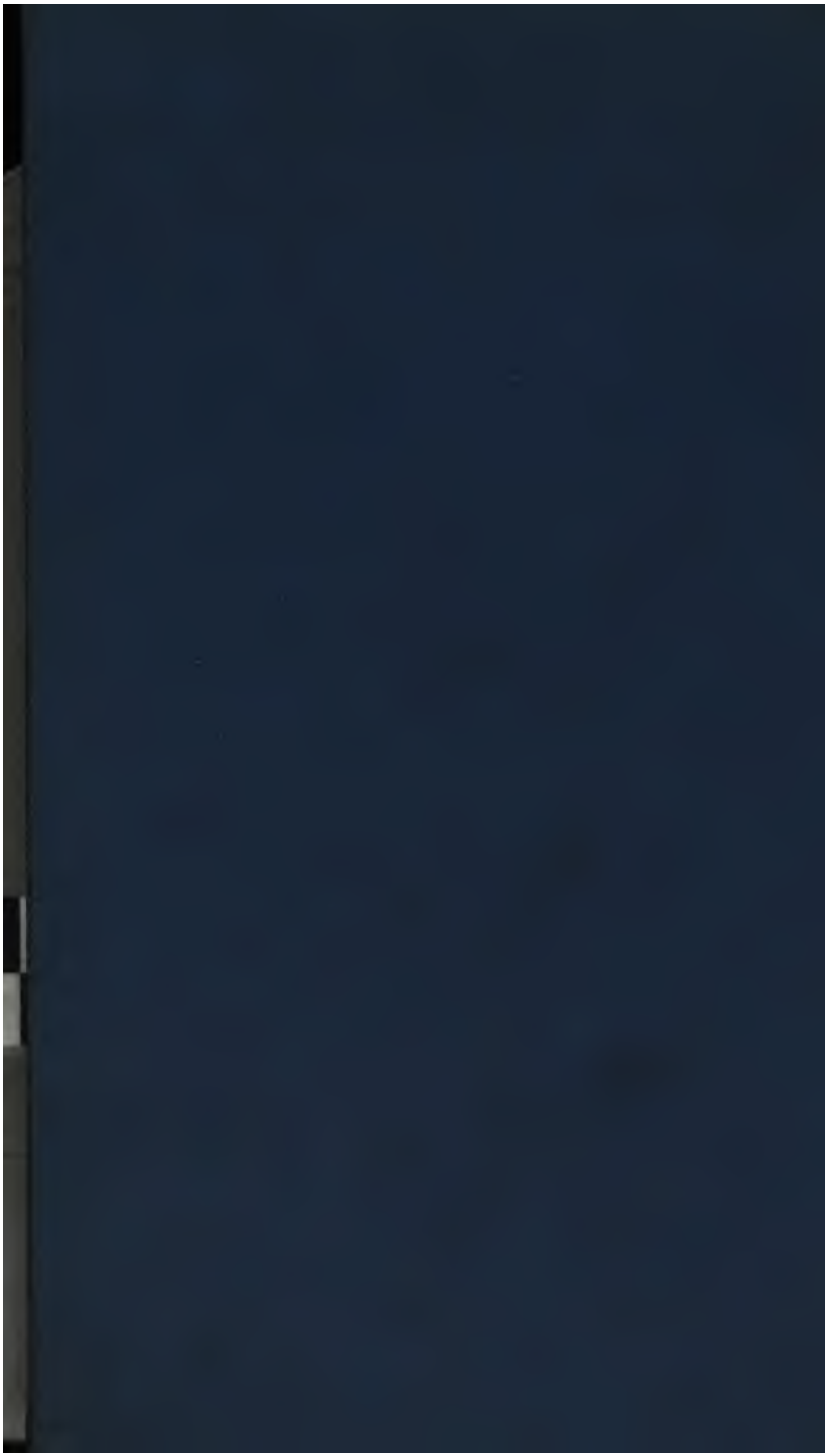
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